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# GREATER CANADA



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THE PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE  
OF THE CANADIAN NORTHWEST

E. B. OSBORN, B.A.

TOGETHER WITH A  
NEW MAP ESPECIALLY  
PREPARED FOR THIS  
VOLUME FROM THE  
LATEST GOVERN-  
MENTAL SURVEYS

NEW YORK

A. WESSELS COMPANY

1900

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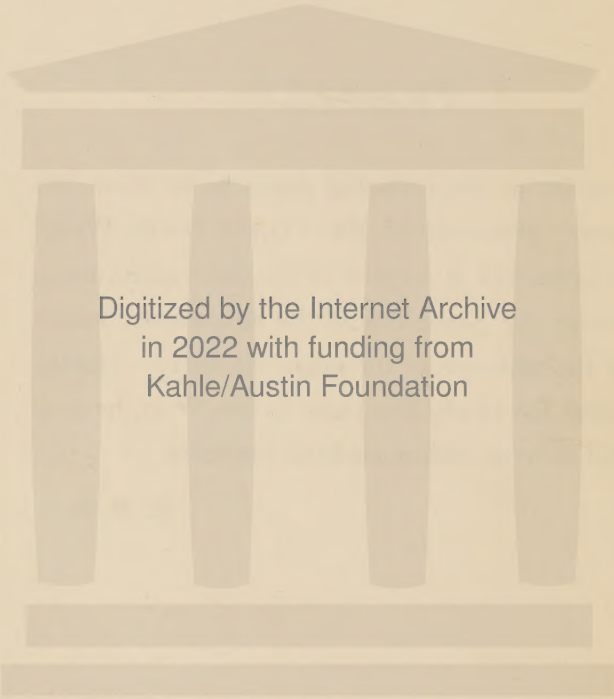
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## PREFACE

IN so far as the following pages touch upon the present prospects of the "Great North-West," the writer has attempted to hit the truthful mean between the pessimism of the unsuccessful settler and the optimism of the migration agent. Having resided for nearly five years in the West, he may claim to write with some little authority.

E. B. O.



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# GREATER CANADA

## CHAPTER I

### THE YUKON DISCOVERIES

THE discovery, three years ago, of phenomenally rich placer-diggings in the Yukon basin caused more excitement and has been more written about than any similar event since 1849 and 1851—years that saw the epoch-making discoveries of gold in California and Australia; so that the writer, who aims at giving an account of the North-West (that was, that is, and that may be), is naturally tempted to begin with the Klondike. To yield to that particular temptation, however, involves no loss of historical perspective; for it is already obvious that the discovery of the Klondike placers, occurring as it did immediately after the establishment of the Kootenay as one of the chief mining districts of the empire, is by far the most important fact in the history of the North-West. Even if

Klondike is not destined to play as indispensable a part in the development of "Greater Canada" as the Rand has played in the development of South Africa, or the Comstock Lode in the development of Nevada and the neighbouring States, it is certain that it has drawn the attention of the world to the North-West and its many probabilities and possibilities, much as did the discovery of '49 and '51 to the advantages of the "Far West" of the United States and our own Australia. Placer-diggings do not, as a rule, last for more than a decade, and, unless valuable quartz-mines are discovered on the Yukon, we cannot hope to see really permanent "mining camps" in that cold and sterile region. Nevertheless, the Klondike discoveries, rich and romantic and utterly unexpected as they were, have given the North-West a world-wide advertisement of inestimable value. And this is an age of advertisement.

Public opinion about such discoveries always passes through two stages—a period of universal credulity, followed by a period of universal incredulity. After the first news of preliminary "pannings" on Eldorado and Bonanza Creeks was brought to Canada by Mr. Ogilvie (a gentleman who has done more hard travelling in the Far North than any two living Arctic explorers,

and has earned the respect of every miner in the Yukon by refusing to take advantage of an official position to enrich himself), every Western scribbler was hard at work inventing circumstantial lies, many of which were reproduced not only by the most respectable journals of the Eastern States and Eastern Canada, but also by those of the mother country. Probably nine-tenths of these fictions originated in Seattle, and other sea-coast towns in the Pacific States, where nearly all the Alaskan miners buy their outfits and supplies, and the head offices of the transportation and trading companies with an Alaskan connection are generally to be found. Thus the Seattle merchant saw his opportunity, and called in the Seattle newspaper man to his aid ; and the latter worthy sat down "right there" and began to boom the Klondike. Knowing that Seattle was a favourite watering-place of the successful Alaskan, or Yukon placer-miner (whose modest "sack" of two or three hundred ounces, the fruit of years of hard labour on Forty Mile Creek, or along the Stewart River, could hardly have stood the price of a good time in lordly 'Frisco), Eastern journalists paid more attention to his tales of wonderful "strikes" made in the Far North than they were in the habit of doing ; and, after the arrival the following

summer of the first treasure-ship from St. Michael (the *Excelsior*, which brought in half a million dollars' worth of dust), even the mother country newspapers began to print these tales. As other ships followed, bringing in large consignments of gold, and a few of the men who had found it, the excitement increased, until any newspaper in the world was only too glad to print and pay for any sort of Klondike news, providing it came from the West. And all that winter the Seattle newspaper man reaped a rich harvest of greenbacks, in spite of the fact that everybody should have known that no fresh tidings could possibly have come out of Dawson after the freezing up of the rivers.

One of the most preposterous of these winter tales—a tale which nobody with the slightest knowledge of geology could possibly have believed—was an account of the discovery of the “mother-vein” of all the Klondike gold, which made its appearance in the last week of 1897 in a Pacific Coast weekly paper. According to the account (which gave the names and addresses of the discoverers, and also their portraits, one of which strangely resembled that of the referee in the Corbett-FitzSimmons glove-fight) the mother-vein was a gigantic ribbon of quartz, everywhere full of nuggets (“all of the same size, and about the size of marbles!”) as a



Christmas pudding is full of plums ; and it seemed to be the opinion of all concerned that not only the gold of Klondike, but also the gold of Cariboo and California, had been ground out and distributed by rivers and glaciers from this one deposit. Nobody who had ever seen a nugget could have swallowed such a yarn ; nevertheless, it was copied by dozens of influential journals in the Eastern States and Eastern Canada, and a little later began to crop up in the European press. And last of all a little paragraph on the subject appeared in the *Times*. True, it was only a very little one, and it was contradicted the very next week ; still, its appearance in such a place must always be regarded as a great achievement of Western journalism.

The world-wide attack of Klondikitis, which occurred two winters ago, was not, however, altogether a result of journalistic enterprise. To begin with, everybody in Canada or the States who had a spade or a pound of tea in stock, made up his mind to sell it to one or other of the prospectors going up last spring ; and those storekeepers who found themselves located in such out-of-the-way North-Western towns as Prince Albert, Edmonton, and Ashcroft, sent the hat round to collect funds for advertising that one of the nine or ten " Canadian

routes " which passed through their particular street. Though some of these routes are practicable enough, and may be justly called "poor man's trails," owing to the abundance of fish and game in the country through which they pass, their great length is against them ; for the best of them (such as those which take in the Mackenzie or the Liard rivers) cannot be traversed in less than a summer. Secondly, the Transcontinental railways began to compete for the privilege of carrying the would-be Klondigger to his port on the Pacific—a competition which led not only to the issue of millions of pamphlets, but also to a general cutting-down of rates. The fact that it was possible in the spring of '98 to travel from ocean to ocean for as little as twelve dollars undoubtedly added very largely to the volume of the rush northward. Thirdly, the Canadian Government, by their advocacy of the notorious "All Canadian Route," *via* Stikine River and Teslin Lake, and their definite promises—neither of which were fulfilled—to have a road between the river and the lake ready by March 10, 1898, and a railway built by September 1, induced thousands to go north early in the year, few of whom would otherwise have made the attempt. If the Senate had not rejected the Liberal Government's bill providing for this

railway, part of it might have been built ; but the concessions to be granted to the contractors were so conspicuously liberal, and the whole measure smacked so strongly of jobbery, that the Senate cannot be blamed for voting it down.

The result of the boom was that 110,000 persons (of whom at least two-thirds came from the Western States and about one-sixth from Canada) journeyed to the Pacific Coast in the year ending May, 1898 ; of which number less than 60,000 made any serious attempt to reach their destination. Of those who made the attempt, hardly a third got through ; for the population of Dawson City and of the creeks in its vicinity, and the various camping places along the Yukon, did not exceed 24,000 a year later. It would, therefore, appear that hardly one in five of those who reached the Coast have succeeded in finding their way to the Yukon. That so large a percentage failed to carry out their plans was a result of the sudden collapse of the boom, when the tide of would-be gold seekers (then at its height) was met by a wave of refugees from Skagway, Dyce, and Wrangel, who brought back most dismal accounts of the state of things at the Passes and in the camps along the Stikine-Teslin trail.

Small as was the percentage of successful

travellers, it is a record for gold rushes in North America. Of those who set out for California in 1849, it is said that not one in ten ever reached the mines; of the thirty thousand or so who tried to reach the placer-diggings on the Fraser in 1858, only between two and three thousand arrived; and of the multitudes who started on the "Washoe Stampede" of 1860 (when the news of the Comstock discovery stirred up the West), barely one in eight seems to have reached Virginia City. Still, taking into consideration the greatness of the western population to-day compared with that of thirty years ago, it cannot be said that this year's rush to Klondike came up to the expectations of old-time placer-miners, one of whom, remembering how all the West stampeded during the Washoe Silver craze, prophesied to the writer that in his opinion at least half a million would make the journey. Truth to tell, the western love for a gamble of any sort—and of all the many games that have been or are played in the West, none offers longer odds than placer-mining—has been chastened by time; or, as one might say, has been diverted into the so-called legitimate channels of business.

After the virtual collapse of the boom, a feeling of incredulity as to the real richness of the new



placers became general, and for a time (until Miss Shaw's much-debated articles appeared in the *Times*) it was believed by most people that Klondike was no better, if no worse, than a second Cariboo. Nearly \$6,000,000 worth of dust had been shipped out in 1897; when it was seen that the apparent output for 1898 did not exceed \$8,000,000 (instead of the \$20,000,000 confidently expected), and it was learned that one of the two richest leads — Bonanza Creek — had somewhat disappointed the hopes of its possessors, even practical miners prophesied that in two or three years the whole field would be practically stripped to such an extent that it would hardly pay white men to work there. And Mr. Ogilvie's assertion that the Klondike "mining-camp" (in the West that term always connects a definite area of metalliferous ground more or less obviously separated from others) held at least \$100,000,000 worth of gold "in sight," with the certainty of much more in unproved and unprospected creeks, was regarded as unjustifiable.

This seeming failure was due, however, (1) to the maladministration of the gold-fields by the Dominion Government, and (2) to the peculiar conditions of placer-mining. And it was the *Times* correspondent who first pointed out that in

1898 the gold-fields were in a state of arrested development owing to these causes, and not because of their comparative poverty. There were two good reasons for this lady's success. In the first place, she was a woman; and it has been use and wont among placer-miners ever since the North-and-South Valley of the Sacramento was first worked over, to give a woman visiting a camp just whatever she asks for—even if it is information as to the yield of a claim! In the second place, she avoided the error that traps so many literary travellers in the West; she did not rely on the evidence proffered by officials. As a rule the English traveller (particularly the observer who is content to view the country through the plate-glass windows of an "observation-car") is apt to believe that the Government official of the West is as disinterested as the occupant of a similar position in his own incorruptible Civil Service. Unfortunately, this is not always the case; for the "spoils system" obtains in Canada to an extent hardly realized by the mere traveller, and is an evil influence similar in kind, if not the same in degree, to that which prevails in the States. The rule has very many exceptions, but it is none the less a rule that the average office-holder in Canada owes his post to political influence, knows only too well

that his income is coterminous with his party's tenure of office, and is tempted to get what he can while he can. Also, many minor officials have their own "axes to grind" (they are storekeepers, land-agents, etc., etc., as well as Government officials), and it is absurd to suppose that such men will tell unpleasant truths to a stranger, especially if that stranger is taking notes. So that the only reliable information to be procured in the North-West is such as may be gathered from the lips of the working men—farmers, miners, etc.—who are not "in politics," or in any way dependent on the politician.

Regarding the maladministration of the Yukon (which has been made a party-question) it is impossible to speak definitely. Miss Shaw's charges received no satisfactory answer at the time; and when those charges were repeated in the Dominion House of Commons, and the Government was challenged to answer them, the only answer that would have satisfied any but a partisan—*i.e.* the granting of a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter—was not forthcoming. The misgovernment of the Yukon officials may have been partly due to the fact that many of them were overworked, and several of the chief officials are, by unanimous consent of the Yukon miners, acquitted of any wish

to profit unduly by their position ; nevertheless it is certain that many of their subordinates indulged in "boodling" (a nasty name for a nasty practice) at the expense of the miners whenever an opportunity offered itself. That claims could not be recorded without the payment of a substantial interest in the ground, and that claims were sometimes "jumped" by officials—everybody, who has been in the country, admits the truth of these allegations on the part of Miss Shaw and other disinterested visitors. The reply of the Dominion Government that no legal evidence of such statements has been produced is no answer to the indictment ; for no evidence is legal until it has been brought before a legal tribunal, and they refused to erect such a tribunal by their refusal of a Royal Commission. It is true Mr. Ogilvie was sent to hold inquiry into the charges, but he had no power to examine witnesses on oath, and we are therefore obliged to believe that his mission was merely a political device to evade the reasonable request of the Government's critics and profit by Mr. Ogilvie's personal popularity. No wonder, then, that there is a general impression in the North-West that certain members of the Government were disposed to regard the Yukon Territory as a preserve to be set apart for the good of their personal and political

friends. Patriotism covers a multitude of political sins, and nobody doubts the patriotism of Sir Wilfred Laurier or of any other Canadian politician (with the possible exception of Mr. Tarte, who thinks it does not pay in Quebec), but it is to be feared that this political sin of the maladministration of the Yukon has diminished the value of the Klondike object lesson as to the value of the North-West very considerably.

And not only are the many laws of this district badly administered, but—and here comes in another chief cause of the seeming failure of Klondike—they are bad in themselves. Thus, while the reduction of the length of a “creek or gulch claim” from 500 to 250 feet was fair enough considering the exceptional richness of the ground, the grabbing of a half of all diggings discovered after a certain date by a Government which “has never dug a single prospect shaft” and is doing nothing whatever to help the prospector, is deeply resented not only by the old-timers (who disapprove of all such innovations on principle), but also by thinking men, who see that such a policy tends to check private exploration. Still, the miners generally would be content to work “on shares” with the Government, if that Government had not decided to annex the profit on their “pard’s” half

of a discovery—which is, practically, the effect of exacting a ten per cent. royalty on the *gross output* of every claim.

In considering this point it must be remembered that, if the ground in this mining camp is phenomenally rich, the difficulties of working it are phenomenally great, and the cost of labour is exceedingly large. The soil is either frozen or flooded all the year; the transport of supplies from Dawson City to the mines costs 10 cents a pound in winter and 35 cents in summer; and the price of labour ranges from 10 dollars a day for unskilled to 15 dollars for skilled workers. Suppose, for instance, a claim-owner employs 20 men on an average (the least number with which “sluicing” can be carried out in an economical way), and the washing-out of his winter’s “dump” results in 75,000 dollars’ worth of dust—what is his nett profit on the year’s work? His wage-bill will be nearer 65,000 dollars than 60,000; the royalty (20 per cent. on the whole output, less 2500 dollars exempted) is 7250 dollars; and out of the residue must come the cost of a variety of necessary supplies and of hauling them or packing them to the mines. Obviously, in such a case, the profit is nothing, or next to nothing. What would have happened to the Rand mines if a ten per cent.



royalty on gross output had been charged by the Transvaal Government?

Unless, therefore, a claim worked in a fairly economical way—up to a certain point the more men employed the more economical sluicing becomes—can be relied upon to produce more than that amount of gold in a year, it does not pay to work it under existing conditions. And since even in Klondike such claims are not common, it is not wonderful that scores of mines (bought at a stiff price from their first holders) remained practically untouched, and that dozens of mine-owners did not wash out their dumps in the summer of '98. "If the d—— politicians want their royalty," an Eldorado miner said, pointing to the great heap of "pay-dirt" taken out in the winter, "*there it is right in there*, and let 'em come and take it out their own selves!" He and many others were and are waiting for the abolition or reduction of this iniquitous tithe. They have been waiting some time now; one result of their inaction being that thousands of new-comers willing enough to work were compelled to stand about Dawson City and kill mosquitoes all the summer of 1898.

Yet another effect of this tax has been the encouragement of "haymaking," *i.e.* the haphazard working over of only the richest parts of a claim,

among those who are not anxious to prolong their stay in a dismal and uninviting country. Many claim-owners, however, being experienced miners, and well aware that careful and systematic work pays best in the end, do not wish to be classed with the "haymakers," and are desirous of obtaining the help of outside capital ; without which, indeed, a multitude of the poorer claims (that would nevertheless be thought rich anywhere else) cannot be touched at present. To these it is already evident that the average Klondike creek or gulch mine cannot be regarded as "poor man's diggings" in the sense that the California placers were so regarded, and even the deep pre-glacial leads of Cariboo, and that the climatic conditions and peculiar position of the country render placer-mining there every whit as costly and laborious as reef-mining in other parts of the world. Until hydraulic machinery, drainage adits, and so forth—mining methods which have yielded a rich harvest from creeks *thrice worked over* (firstly by "haymaking" pioneers, secondly by expert placer-miners who bought their claims, and thirdly by Chinamen and Indians) in California and British Columbia—are generally possible, the real worth of the Klondike goldfields will not become apparent, and, without a large influx of outside capital,

modern machinery and modern engineering are out of the question.

But until the royalty is removed or considerably reduced it is not likely that capital will flow in—a conclusion which may be commended to the attention of Sir Wilfred Laurier, who is a good friend of the North-West. In the present series of articles on the North-West (in the course of which it will be necessary to return to the subject of the Yukon goldfields) the writer will have to point out again and again how industrial progress has been hampered by political blunders, and it is to be hoped that so illogical and impolitic a blunder (illogical because it is applied to but one of many mining districts in the Dominion, impolitic because it arrests a young industry) will soon be rectified.

As to the extraordinary richness of the Klondike goldfields there can be no doubt whatever; for all the vast amount of circumstantial evidence accumulated during the last three years tends to prove that Mr. Ogilvie's estimate was below—far below—the mark. Prospecting on the Stewart—"Ogilvie's tip," as it was called—has not as yet revealed any great deposit of "coarse gold" there, nor have any quartz discoveries of real importance been made in the Yukon; but the discovery of the Atlin goldfields (which seem to be quite as rich as Cariboo)

leads us to hope that other portions of the Northern gold-belt will prove valuable. In spite of the royalty the Klondike Creeks produced nearly \$18,000,000 worth of gold in 1899—double the output of 1898. Hunker's, which has turned out surprisingly rich, has produced about \$6,000,000, and both Eldorado and Bonanza have yielded half as much again as they did last year. Two out of every three of the claims on these leads now have machinery (pipe-boilers of ten to twelve-horse power and engines of four or five-horse power for hoisting being the average installation), and machinery will be at work this winter in several other creeks. Dominion Creek is expected to make a return of \$7,000,000 next year, and others—Gold Bottom, Last Chance Quartz and Sulphur among them—are likely to show good results. As yet, however, the time when the company takes the place of the individual has not really arrived, and, until the present transitional period is over and a better class of claims come into the market, the investor cannot be advised to buy shares in any of the Klondike companies now before the public. Having regard to the existence of the ten per cent. royalty and the exorbitant figure at which even unproved ground on the less fertile creeks is held, the great capitalist is not likely to meddle with Klondike for a while,

## CHAPTER II

### THE PROGRESS OF THE FUR TRADE

AS is the case with so many of the provinces of our world-wide empire, the earlier history of "Greater Canada" is essentially a chapter—and that not the least interesting—in the annals of British commerce. The exploration of the North-West was almost entirely the work of certain great fur-trading corporations; to the oldest and greatest of which, the Hudson's Bay Company, we owe our peaceful acquisition of a territory as large as the whole of Europe. For, though the French were the first to travel beyond the Great Lakes and establish trading-posts and missions on the Saskatchewan and other rivers, they lacked the patience and power of organization necessary to hold what they had grasped; and long before Quebec and the French king's "few arpents of snow" had changed hands, the French traders found that the inland tribes were so much under

the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company officers as to refuse to deal with them. Thus in 1750 Le Gardeur St. Pierre, who had been continuing Verandrye's exploration of the interior, reported that "the English on the Bay by their threats alone are able to make the Indians undertake anything they wish," and that, in consequence, no Frenchmen could hope to do much business in those regions. It will be seen, therefore, that the authority maintained over the Indians by the Hudson's Bay Company—an authority never disputed, though never backed by force of arms, and still as strong in many parts of the North-West as it was fifty years ago—was already a political influence of importance.

From the time of the earliest settlements in "New France," as Lower Canada was called in the 17th century, the fur trade had been recognized as the staple industry of its inhabitants. But as colonization progressed, the more valuable fur-bearing animals became scarce in the vicinity of the settlements; and before long the actual trading in peltries fell into the hands of a peculiar class of men, the *coureurs des bois*, hardy, dare-devil adventurers, with a knowledge of Indian language and character, who travelled alone to the far-off hunting camps and bartered canoe-loads of

goods bought on long credit for furs and skins. These excursions often lasted into the second year, and when the traveller returned—if he escaped drowning in some dangerous rapids, or the loss of his scalp, he was certain to appear again—his store of peltries was turned over to the merchant who had supplied the goods, and he for his part handed over their value (minus the price of his goods and as much again for his risk) to the *coureur*. Whatever the latter received—thanks to the former's arithmetic it was generally too little rather than too much—was sure to be spent in a few weeks of riotous living and drinking; after which the *coureur*, finding his pouch empty, would obtain a fresh credit from his merchant and seek the woods once more. After long years of such a life, the wilderness, as it were, entered into his soul, and as often as not he married an Indian wife, and, except for the purpose of selling his furs and making merry with the proceeds, never set foot in the settlements. From these marriages arose the race of the *Métis*—the French-Canadian half-breeds, who in later years served the British fur-trading companies as hunters, trappers, and *voyageurs*.

Later on, the reckless misconduct of these *coueurs des bois* and their sons caused them to



fall into disrepute with the missionary priests, who brought pressure to bear on the French Government in Canada, and succeeded in obtaining an enactment that only those who held a license should trade with the Indians. It was intended that these licenses should be issued only to men of approved character, but in point of fact they were frequently given as rewards to successful soldiers and men of good family with influence at Court, who promptly sold them to anybody willing to pay a good round price. Accordingly they fell into the hands of the merchants who employed the *coureurs des bois* in their dealings with the Indians; and things were as bad as before, or even worse. At last, however, military outposts were established to control the merchants and their underlings; after which a number of rich and respectable capitalists began to trade directly with the Indians on a larger and more liberal scale than the others could afford. But even then unrestrained competition led to many and serious abuses; so that, shortly before the close of French rule—or rather misrule—in Canada, it could be justly said that “it profited neither a man’s soul nor his purse to engage in fur-trading.”

During the wars for the possession of Canada these *coureurs des bois* were employed generally by



the French to negotiate alliances with the various Indian tribes ; and many of them engaged in the infamous scalp-traffic—a peculiar branch of the fur trade inaugurated by the French commanders and prosecuted on the other side only by way of reprisal—and collected scalps among their Indian friends as methodically as they had formerly collected beaver-skins. The outrages committed on women and children by these men, and by the Indians and half-breeds at their instigation, left a memory of abiding horror in the English-speaking settlements ; so that for many years after the final conquest the British merchants in Montreal and Quebec—most of them were Scotchmen, by the way—absolutely refused to employ them as their agents. They, on their part, detested the manners and business methods of the conquerors ; and when the United States declared their independence, the great majority of them entered the service of American traders, who never asked how their furs had been come by, and were, furthermore, able to supply goods at much lower rates than their Canadian rivals. It was estimated that in 1780, two-thirds of the furs taken in Canada went to dealers on the American side, and the Montreal merchants found it necessary to unite for self-protection. The result was the formation of the

famous North-West Company, a combination of all the chief fur-trading firms in Montreal.

In those days, when the only means of travel was by water-way—canoes and their contents being carried across portages from one river system to another—the so-called Grand Portage at the north-west extremity of Lake Superior was the “key” to the whole North-West. Accordingly, the first step taken by the canny directors of the newly-formed company was to petition Governor Haldimand for the exclusive right to use that carrying-place, “or”—as was cannily subjoined by the petitioners—“the other passage we are attempting to discover.” But though they gave the Governor to understand that, unless this favour was granted, the North-Western fur trade would infallibly fall into the hands of United States merchants, this petition was not granted; nor were further requests for the exclusive right to trade in the North-West, and for the privilege of keeping ships on Lake Superior—at that time only allowed to be navigated by the king’s vessels—entertained any more favourably by the Government. Finding they could not obtain these special privileges, the directors set to work to forestall the competition they dreaded, or pretended to dread; and so energetic and successful were their efforts, that in

1784 the value of their property (exclusive of buildings, boats, etc.) in the North-West exceeded £25,000, and upwards of five hundred men were employed in taking goods and bringing back furs from Grand Portage, while as many more were working for them in the interior. The yearly profit seems to have averaged ten per cent.—a very fair dividend considering the enormous difficulty and expense of transporting goods by river and portage for distances of from two to four thousand miles.

All this time the Hudson's Bay Company—to whose first Governor, Prince Rupert, a royal charter had been granted in 1670—were extending their operations in every direction from York Factory on the Bay, and their rivalry was soon felt by the employees of the North-West Company. For many years the agents of either corporation, though keen competitors in the way of business, were on most friendly terms with one another. Nearly all of them being Scotchmen, they would naturally think Scotch and drink Scotch on the rare occasions of their meeting. And so, until the competition was intensified by the appearance of a third company, we hear nothing of the war of fur traders, though it sometimes happened that the factories of the two great companies were built, as at Red River, within a few yards of one another.

In 1798 quarrels arose among the North-West partners, which resulted in a number seceding and forming the X Y Company. Almost immediately a sort of triple duel began. The officers of the three companies came to blows whenever they met; alliances defensive and offensive were formed with the Indians, and a parcel of furs often passed through the hands of all three companies before it set out on its way to Montreal, or to York Factory. Several murders took place, and in 1803 it was thought necessary to pass an Act placing the North-West—up to that date a sort of no man's land in matters of law—under the jurisdiction of the Canadian courts. This, however, did little or nothing to stop the fighting and fur-lifting; nor did the amalgamation in 1808 of the X Y and North-West Companies restore the former peaceful rivalry. The only difference was that the now North-West Company robbed the Hudson's Bay people with a greater feeling of pleasure, knowing that their directors could influence the Canadian judges and juries in their favour, and that they were numerically the stronger.

It was the intervention of an outsider, the Earl of Selkirk—who was in some respects a prototype of Mr. Cecil Rhodes—that enabled the elder company to hold their own again, and in the end brought

about the defeat of their opponents. At the beginning of the century that nobleman was deeply interested in various colonization schemes, and happening to visit Montreal in connection with them, became profoundly impressed by the accounts he received of the great possibilities of the North-West. During his stay there he collected a mass of information anent the fur trade and the fur traders—by the irony of circumstances nobody helped him more in this matter than the partners of the North-West Company—and on his return to England he prosecuted his inquiries in every direction. He soon saw that the charter-rights possessed by the Hudson's Bay Company, if used to the best advantage, must infallibly turn the scale in their favour. For the distance from York Factory on the Bay—the depôt to which their trade-goods were shipped from England—to the north-western trading posts is, as a glance at the map will show, shorter by more than fifteen hundred miles than their opponent's overland route from Montreal, and, according to the terms of the charter granted to Prince Rupert, not only was the commerce of the Bay legally and exclusively theirs, but also the commerce of *all the waters flowing into that great inland sea*. These, no doubt, were the chief considerations which caused

Lord Selkirk to espouse their cause, but there were others of the first importance. All the directors of the North-West Company were against colonization, thinking it would injure the fur trade; a large use of liquor was made in their traffic with the Indians—a pernicious practice condemned by their opponents; and they made no attempt, as did the Hudson's Bay officers, to discourage the destruction of fur-bearing animals in the breeding season.

Coming to the conclusion that the Hudson's Bay Company might be, and should be, masters of the situation, Lord Selkirk set to work to buy up a controlling interest, and ultimately succeeded in obtaining shares to the value of £40,000, the capital of the company being less than £110,000. This, together with the election of near relations and friends of his to the board of directors, gave him unlimited control of its policy, and he hastened to use his power to the uttermost.

His first step was to obtain from the company a grant of land (no less than 116,000 square miles west of Lake Winnipeg) in which to plant a settlement. There can be no doubt that he meant this settlement to be a garrison as well as a source from which supplies and labour could be obtained. At the time there prevailed in the Highlands a

desire for emigration—a desire that subsequently gathered force owing to the cruel conduct of the Duchess of Sutherland in depopulating her estates to make sheep pastures ; and he had no difficulty in obtaining recruits there and in Ireland, parties of whom were despatched in 1811, 1813, and 1815. These poor people suffered incredible hardships, both on the road and when they reached their destination ; for they were unprovided with suitable clothes for the winter, had not the necessary implements, and were shamefully neglected by the agents entrusted with their care. Fever on board ship, scurvy in their winter camps, and a constant lack of food seem to have killed a third of them ; and the heartless conduct of the North-West Company's people, who harried them in every possible way short of actual bloodshed, prevented any serious attempt to work on the land. The presence of these unwelcome colonists, more especially as later on some of them were armed and drilled by the Hudson's Bay Company officers, naturally embittered the existing warfare, which came to a climax in 1816, when Governor Semple, of Fort Douglas, and twenty of his men were massacred by Indians and half-breeds in the employ of the North-West Company. Nearly all the settlers then at Red River left for Jack River after that



event, whence they returned under protection of their patron in the following year.

Hearing of the massacre at Fort Douglas, Lord Selkirk, who was in Montreal, made up his mind to levy war on a larger scale. He formed the plan of seizing Fort William, the headquarters of the North-West Company, and to that intent engaged a large band of *voyageurs*, enlisted about a hundred men that had belonged to de Meuron's regiment and had served as mercenaries in the French army during the war with Spain, bought artillery and small arms, and set out with his little army forthwith. Before leaving he contrived to get himself appointed a Justice of the Peace for the Indian territories and Upper Canada, a position which added much to his authority and was well worth what he paid for it. While his preparations were afoot, the unfortunate North-West partners made advances to him for a coalition of the two companies, and at the same time appealed to the Secretary of State. In neither cases were their efforts successful, seeing that the news of the massacre had caused a strong feeling against them.

Lord Selkirk's campaign was entirely successful. Arriving in the Kaministiquia River about mid-August, he deployed his men and cannon so as to



command every approach to Fort William, the cannon being loaded and pointed on to the buildings. Next day, in his capacity of Justice of the Peace, he sent two men into the fort to arrest the officers in charge, and, no resistance being made, entered with his force, captured all within and searched the place, seizing about £12,000 worth of furs and a quantity of other valuable property. Shortly afterwards the North-West officers were sent off to Montreal, where they were charged with being accessories to the outrages perpetrated on the earl's estate at Red River that same year. Being let out on bail, these officers swore out a warrant for Lord Selkirk's arrest; but when the constable arrived at Fort William he was taken by the shoulders and put off the premises and told to go home again—which he did after a short imprisonment, with the warrant pinned on his back. Lord Selkirk next sent out parties to capture other posts belonging to the rival company. The factories at Fond du Lac, Michipicoton, and Lac la Pluie fell into his possession without any fighting; after which a strong body of de Meuron's mercenaries journeyed to Red River with the view of recapturing Fort Douglas. The second capture of that strongly fortified and garrisoned post was really a notable feat of arms; for the invaders

took advantage of a dark and stormy night to scale the walls and make prisoners twice their own number, before ever they were known to be in the country. Finally the earl settled his colonists in their former homes, and obtained a treaty from the Indians so that they might never be disturbed in their possession of the land. This done, he returned to England by way of Dakota and New York (thus evading about a hundred writs waiting for him in Montreal), leaving the Hudson's Bay Company masters of the field.

In spite of Lord Selkirk's high-handed procedure, he did more than any other man of his time to strengthen our hold in the North-West, little known and much misunderstood in those days. He was the first to recognize the possibilities of successful agriculture there, and the first to set the tide of immigration flowing in that direction; and he persevered in his schemes of colonization, though they much impaired his private fortune, and in spite of opposition from some of his fellow-directors as well as from the Montreal Company. If the Red River had been colonized by men from the United States, instead of by Scotchmen and French-Canadians, the probability is that the Dominion would have ended where Ontario ends. Also, he saw that the policy of the Hudson's Bay Company

towards the Indians—a policy which combined charity with courtesy—was more humane, and therefore more effective, than that of their opponents; and, seeing that, would make no terms with those who followed the common or “American” methods of trading with the red man. When in 1821, very shortly after his death, the companies were united—personal dislike of the Montreal traders seems to have made him obstinately opposed to this union—the new corporation kept to the old style of H.B.C.—three letters which spelt safety among the North-West Indians—and followed the old-time policy, with the result that the horrible Indian wars so common in the Western States never troubled the Canadian North-West. For which we have to thank Lord Selkirk in no small measure.

## CHAPTER III

### THE REIGN OF "THE COMPANY"

THE union of the two rival companies took place in 1821—a year after the death of Lord Selkirk—on the condition that each party to the contract should provide an equal capital for carrying on the trade. Twenty-five chief factors and twenty-eight chief traders (named alternately from the principal officers of the old Hudson's Bay and the North-West Companies) were appointed, and it was arranged that two-fifths of the yearly profit should be divided among these in lieu of a fixed salary. As, therefore, a chief officer's income depended directly upon the success of the year's trading, and as, furthermore, any of the other servants (who received fixed salaries of from £20 to £100 a year) might hope to gain the position of a factor or trader by good conduct and energy, the new Hudson's Bay Company—"The Company," as it is still called throughout the North-West—was

always served most faithfully and effectively. The rule that no servant in the employ of the company should deal in furs for his own private benefit was, for instance, never known to be broken, and so rapid an extension of trade took place that in 1836 the number of forts and factories was double what it had been at the time of the coalition. In that year the company possessed 136 of these establishments and provided employment for 25 chief factors, 27 chief traders, 152 "clerks," and about 1200 regular servants, in addition to such occasional labourers as voyageurs, hunters and trappers, etc. In 1856 the number of establishments had increased to 154, of which fourteen were in Oregon, and twelve in British Columbia. And at that time there were few of the Indians (who then, according to evidence given before a select committee of the House of Commons, numbered about 147,800) who did not owe some luxury or necessity of their simple life to the "Hudson's Bay chiefs."

It was the general custom to give these hunters credit in advance of their hunt; a custom which seldom or never led to loss, seeing that (unlike his semi-civilized descendant of to-day) the old-time Indian was the soul of honour in the matters of paying his debts and keeping his word. Otherwise

the North-Western Indian—that “Oriental with a frozen heart,” as he has been happily defined—was not a creature to be admired. Recklessly improvident, cruel and deceitful, a practised thief and an inveterate gambler, he was incapable of the splendid devotion and chivalrous bravery so often displayed by his Eastern cousins. Each one of the North-Western “nations” seems to have been distinguished from the rest by the hypertrophy of some particular vice rather than by the possession of some excelling virtue. Thus the Salteaux were too proud and ignorant even to hunt for food in times of scarcity, and were almost constantly in a state of starvation. The Surcees were the most expert thieves, horse-stealing being their speciality. The Blackfeet were the most turbulent of the tribes, and otherwise infamous for their treatment of women, their “squaws” being used as beasts of burden, though not so well cared for as even the ponies. The Assiniboine Indians were notorious for their infamous treachery; for they alone of North American tribes abused the laws of hospitality, often waylaying and plundering a guest who had just left their tepees. The Swampies were little men and great cowards; and being often in want of food were sometimes known to resort to cannibalism. The Sioux, who once laid claim to

hunting-grounds in the British North-West and were driven by the united\* efforts of the other Indians below the boundary line, were, physically and morally, the best of the North-Western tribes. The Coast Indians were far higher in the scale of civilization than any of these inland tribes; though some of their customs were barbarous in the extreme, and they never took so kindly to the white man as the Crees. Sir George Simpson frequently comments on the mechanical ingenuity of the British Columbian Indians; he had seen, for instance, at Fort Simpson the head of a vessel some of them were building there, so well executed as to be taken for the work of a white mechanic, and one man had prepared accurate charts of the adjacent shores. They were skilful carvers, and sufficiently in love with their skill to ornament not only their huts and totem-poles with carvings, but also all their other belongings—canoes, fish-spears, war-clubs, etc.; they worked and engraved ornaments of metal, and last but not least they invented the Chinook jargon—a species of Volapük by which communication between the numerous tribes, each having its own language, to be found on the Pacific slopes was rendered possible. Many of the

\* They returned for a time under Sitting Bull after the massacre of Custer's command.



Coast Indians work and earn good wages in the saw-mills, canneries, and mines of British Columbia, and, though they do not accept Christianity so readily as the inland nations, there is reason to believe they are far more capable of comprehending it in both practice and theory.

The kind treatment of all sorts and conditions of Indians in time of sickness or famine by the Hudson's Bay officers (who never forgot that in dealing with savage tribes courtesy is the better part of charity) did much to increase the feeling of mutual confidence based upon fair dealing in matters of business. Moreover, the clerks and other servants of the company, and even the chief factors and traders, often married Indian women, and the offspring of these marriages are to be met with in every class of North-Western society at the present day. Many of these Scotch half-breeds (whatever the fraction of Indian blood, one-fourth, one-eighth, or even less, the term "half-breed" is used) have the black eyes, lank blue-black hair, aquiline nose, and high cheek-bones characteristic of the Indian; a few, however, are as fair as the fairest of full-blooded Caucasians. The latter will often deny their Indian ancestry through a false sense of shame, but in vain; for their speech bewrayeth them. When one who claims to be a

Scotchman from Scotland compliments you on "a good sot" (shot), or speaks of a "pair of soes" (shoes), then you know that his blood is not neat Scotch, and you think it most probable that one of his ancestors served the company in some capacity in the good old days, and found he could not live without feminine society.

The writer remembers hearing the origin of the "natives" discussed on the verandah of a little wooden hotel in Saskatchewan. During the conversation an old Irishman pointed out that for one English "breed" there were ten Scotch and fifty French, but "niver an Oirish half-breed at all." The last fact—undoubtedly a fact as far as the writer's observation goes—he attributed to the national pride and purity of the Milesian, who would never demean himself by contracting alliances with women of an inferior race. But his panegyric came to an end abruptly when a Canadian suggested that the reason might well be a very different one. "I've heard say," he remarked, "that the squaws—even the oldest and the crookedest Swampies—won't ever look at an Irishman." After which there would certainly have been a mingling of Canadian and Irish blood but for the opportune ringing of the dinner-bell.

Before the coalition of the Hudson's Bay and

North-West Companies the former were in the habit of importing Orkneymen to serve as voyageurs and canoemen, whereas the latter invariably made use of French-Canadian half-breeds. These Orkneymen, though hardy watermen and hard workers, were disliked by the Indians on account of their dour and silent manners; so that the Canadian Métis, who possessed the gaiety and powers of conversation of their French ancestors, and were ready enough to fraternize with the Indians (their half-brothers in a sense), proved much more useful to their employers. Lord Selkirk, recognizing in this fact one cause of the North-West Company's greater success in extending their trade, eventually put an end to the importation of men from the Orkneys, and brought about the employment of Canadian voyageurs by the Hudson's Bay corporation. Though the building of railways and the use of steamers on the larger rivers have caused the virtual extinction of the old-time voyageurs and freighters, a few, however, may still be met in the country north of the Saskatchewan—a vast country as yet untouched by settlement. So far as the writer's experience goes, Harmon's character of the French half-breed, given in his journal of voyages and travels in North America, is as pertinent to-day

as it was in 1819. "Although what they consider good eating and drinking is their chief good," says that wanderer in the Lone Land, "yet, when necessity compels them to it, they submit to great privation and hardship, not only without complaining, but even with cheerfulness and gaiety. They never think of providing for future wants, and seldom lay up any part of their earnings to serve them in any day of sickness or in the decline of life. They are not brave, but when they apprehend little danger, they will often, as they say, play the man. They are very deceitful, and are gross flatterers to the face of a person, whom they will basely slander behind his back. They are obedient but not faithful servants." Of the many descendants of these people—those "Men of the Movement" who rebelled against civilization under the leadership of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont—the writer will have something to say later on, when he comes to deal with those much misunderstood episodes, the half-breed rebellions of 1870 and 1885. Most of them are now peacefully settled along the Saskatchewan River, where they live not unhappily, farming a little, hunting a little, fishing a little, freighting a little, and talking over their camp fires not a little of the good old days, when they or their fathers dwelt on the

Red River, and served the servants of "the Company."

In the early days canoes were used, but the "York boat" (manned by nine voyageurs, eight of whom rowed and the ninth steered) gradually took the place of these frail craft. Brigades, composed of from eight to four of these boats, were constantly travelling between the various posts, carrying supplies and bringing back the bales of furs collected during the season. When a strong rapid was encountered the boats were unloaded and, with their freight, carried past overland—work which was often excessively severe. If the rapids were not sufficiently formidable to render a "portage" necessary, the crew would land and draw the boats along by means of lines. On the greater lakes a large square sail was hoisted.

The goods carried in these York boats were usually done up in bales, each weighing about one hundred pounds. The cargo generally consisted of from seventy to eighty of these "pieces," so that the task of carrying them over a seven-mile portage was by no means a laughing matter.

Latterly the company transported the bulk of their supplies by ox-cart over the plains, and the calling of the freighters became more important than that of the voyageurs. The carts used—"Red

River carts," as they were called—were constructed entirely of wood, without any iron whatever, the axles and rims of the wheels not excepted. If a breakage occurred it was mended by means of a strip of dried buffalo hide, which was soaked in water and wound round the injured part; this, as it dried, contracted and hardened, binding the fracture firmly. Each cart was drawn by one ox or an Indian pony, the weight of the load carried being half a ton, and the average rate of progress about twenty miles a day. The number of carts in a train varied, sometimes amounting to several hundreds, and in that case it was divided into brigades of ten carts each. To each three carts there was one driver, and the whole train had a supply of spare animals varying in number according to the state and length of the train. The rate paid to freighters between Red River and St. Paul, Minnesota, to which place the carts went in large numbers, was from sixteen to eighteen shillings per one hundred pounds; but a large proportion of this was paid in goods at Fort Garry prices, which reduced the actual cost of freight very materially. In the forties it was estimated that the Hudson's Bay Company and petty traders employed about 1500 of these carts between St. Paul and Red River, and 500 between Red River

and the Saskatchewan ; so that 600 to 700 men were engaged in this business.

Language itself is a species of history, and many of the so-called "slang" phrases of the modern Nor'-Wester are historical evidence of the existence of this reign of the company. Sometimes to-day one hears a dollar-bill described as a "blanket ;" a reference to the Hudson's Bay Company notes, which formed the only currency in the North-West of those days and was so styled by the "old travellers" of the forties.

Again, when a North-Western old-timer invites you to drink with him, he generally asks you to "take a *horn*," and, before swallowing his own portion, utters the mysterious saying, "Well, here's a ho, boy !" by which quaint phrases we are reminded of the days when a buffalo-horn was the commonest form of a drinking-cup, and the signal to attack on the occasion of the great buffalo-hunts was the cry of "Ho !" on the part of the leader of the party. When anything is hidden it is "cached ;" money is often spoken of as "otter-skins ;" and the settler speaks of his house as a "tepee," even if he has never seen the Indian's circular tent to which that name rightly belongs.

An account of the romance of the old fur-trading days will be found in Appendix A.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE NEW RÉGIME

FROM 1821 to 1869 the Governor and Council of Assiniboine (appointed by the Hudson's Bay Company) possessed the only legal authority in the Red River settlement, and, as might have been expected, found the task of enforcing their decrees often difficult, and at times impossible. The population consisted largely of French half-breeds, and the governor had no armed force in reserve to meet resistance ; so that only the constant exercise of tact and firmness could ensure the safety of life and property in times of excitement. Though the fact that nearly all the members of the community owed their means of livelihood to the company strengthened his hands very considerably, yet it must ever be accounted creditable (not only to the governors, but also to the governed) that murder and theft were almost unknown among the Red River settlers. True, there were seasons of the year (after the return of the buffalo-runners, for

instance, and when freighters from Saskatchewan or York Factory came in) when the little village under the walls of Fort Garry was a pandemonium of drunken, gambling "breeds," but nothing worse than a black eye or a bitten thumb, or a kick "between the long ribs and the short," ever befell those who took a hand in these "scrapping-hitches." As for shooting affrays, lynching parties, and other incidents of the march of civilization in the Western States, nothing of the sort is to be found in the chronicles of Red River in the days when Sir George Simpson ruled all Rupert's Land. And perhaps it is to Sir George Simpson himself that this state of things was due in the last result. For forty years Governor of Rupert's Land, during all that time there was no appeal from his decision in any matter affecting the North-Western policy of the company, and being president *ex officio* of the Council of Assiniboine, he was superior to the governor, whom, indeed, he himself virtually appointed. No man ever understood the half-breeds better, nor was more loved and feared by them; and there is reason to believe that if he had been living in 1869 we should never have heard of Louis Riel, or of the rebellions of '70 and '85. The rapidity of his movements, whether travelling by water or over the snows—his majestic cordiality

towards inferiors—his wonderful memory for names and faces—his exact knowledge of the smallest matters pertaining to the fur trade—are still remembered in the North-West. Another characteristic of this truly great man was his carefulness to surround himself with all possible display. Wherever he went he took a piper, and, when entering a fort, was most particular that his men should be dressed in their best. On his arrival it was customary to fire a gun ; after which the piper struck up his music and the whole party marched into the fort, the pipes in front and Sir George behind them, with the rest, also stepping in time, at a decent interval.

During the first half of the company's reign at Red River, the only cause of ill-feeling between their officers and those subject to their authority was their determination to keep at all hazards the monopoly of the fur trade. About the year 1834 private persons began importing goods from England on their own account and for their own use, and gradually the system extended until they sent for goods on speculation of selling at a profit. This was countenanced by the company until these petty traders began to agitate against the exclusive trade in furs ; after which every possible obstacle was placed in the way of private importation. This

was an act of injustice, and, more than that, a tactical blunder ; for it forced the petty traders to bring in supplies over the plains from the United States, and led to furs being smuggled across the boundary. In the end the company failed to maintain their legal right to the monopoly of the fur trade, and after 1849 (when a great demonstration in favour of "Free-trade" prevented the Hudson's Bay Company's court from punishing a half-breed who had sold furs to a private trader) settlers on the Red River openly equipped parties and sent them into the interior to traffic with the Indians. The company, therefore, instead of attempting to punish these men and their agents, determined to crush out their competition by the sheer force of their own greater wealth and superior resources.

Many of these petty traders were Canadians, and their representations (often highly coloured by personal prejudice) gradually brought about a general impression in Canada that the Hudson's Bay Company were misgoverning for their own advantage a vast tract of country (to which they had no moral right), and were trespassing on the liberties of British subjects. The necessity of accurately defining the boundaries of Canada eventually led to the sending of Chief-Justice Draper to England in 1857 with instructions to

inquire into the legality of the company's title to the North-West, and to ascertain how that title might be extinguished. The direct result of this mission was that Canadians became convinced the title was good in law (as the greatest English lawyers always held), and that it could only be extinguished by agreement between the Canadas and the Hudson's Bay Company. An indirect result was an increased interest in the North-West by the leading statesmen of the Canadas and what are now the Maritime Provinces of the Dominion. In the same year a Select Committee of the British House of Commons considered the whole question of the North-West and its future ; and, having collected a vast amount of information on the subjects of the fur trade and the agricultural possibilities of the country, made certain recommendations, the chief of which was that Vancouver's Island should be created a Crown Colony by the revocation of the Hudson's Bay Company's license to exclusive trade there. It became increasingly clear that the North-West was destined to pass out of the company's hands at no distant date. Moreover, in 1859 the license granted on the Queen's accession to exclusive trade in the North-West for twenty-one years expired, the Secretary of State's offer to renew it for two years being

declined by the company—a step which proved that the authorities of that grand old firm foresaw and were prepared to accept the inevitable.

British Columbia became a Crown Colony in 1859, and from that time onwards various schemes for bringing the North-West under Canadian rule were discussed between the Canadian and British authorities. When, in the sixties, the idea of confederation—of a Canada which should extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific—became a force in the higher politics of the interested colonies, actual negotiations began for the purchase of Rupert's Land by Canada. It was not, however, till March, 1869, that the transfer was at last brought about—the Hudson's Bay Company receiving for the surrender of their rights £300,000, a number of reservations of land in the vicinity of their forts, and the right to one-eighteenth of all surveyed land.

During the course of these negotiations the Hudson's Bay officials at Red River found it extremely hard to keep order; nevertheless, but for the foolish boasting of the Canadian-born element—some of them openly asserted that the half-breeds would soon be "improved" off the face of the whole North-West!—the disturbance of 1869 and '70 might never have occurred. In particular,

the conduct of certain surveyors sent into the country before the purchase was completed gave great offence ; for they ran their lines across the Red River farms (most of which consisted of long ribbons of land having two or three chains' frontage on some river or lake and extending back for as much as two miles) without regard to ancient boundaries, and caused the occupants to believe that Canada did not intend to respect their rights. Though the Dominion system of surveying (which maps out the country into townships of  $6 \times 6$  sections or square miles, all boundary-lines running N. to S. or E. to W.) has been a great success from the scientific point of view, there is no doubt the attempt by the Canadian Government to apply it to the whole of their new possession was the immediate cause of the rebellion of 1870.

In 1869 the number of settlers along the Red River and the Assiniboine had risen to 11,800, half of them French half-breeds unable to read or write, and very easily led or misled. None of the people—not even Louis Riel, who passed for a “scholar” even among the English-speaking “natives”—had any knowledge of Canada or the Canadian Government; with them “The Company” and the British Empire were synonymous terms,



and their idea of the transfer was that they and their belongings had been sold to a foreign power. They judged Canada by the Canadians they knew—bumptious, ill-mannered traders from Toronto, who could not even swear in French ; and bustling, business-like surveyors, who carried about with them evil-looking instruments, and did not conceal their contempt for the habits and customs of the “ natives.” Living in a curiously isolated community, they and their leaders—of whom Riel soon proved himself the ablest—became convinced that they could resist any force brought against them from outside, and by setting up a government of their own save themselves and their property, until such time as the Queen could hear and redress their complaints.

Louis Riel was undoubtedly a man of great natural ability ; and if he had had a sound education—really he knew nothing of the world outside, though he had read a great many books—he might have been a benefactor to his race. He showed at least one political talent (almost amounting to genius) in the way he gathered together all the elements of discord on Red River into a strong and easily-handled party ; and his devices for keeping his heterogeneous forces in line—they included at first not only the French, but also

most of the English-speaking half-breeds, the Roman Catholic priests, the advocates of annexation to the States, and a number of others "with axes to grind"—were admirably calculated. His proclamations, full of grandiose phrases smacking of Rousseau, seem to have impressed a community of simple-minded people; and he was an orator, rather magniloquent than eloquent, both in French and English. He never permitted familiarity, and, so far as possible, held himself aloof from his people, the *Métis*, only going among them on what might be called "State" occasions; for, like Sir George Simpson, he saw that a man wishing to keep his influence over such half-civilized folk must always remember to stand on his dignity. How to obtain and to maintain a party in the society about him—this he understood; but his childish ignorance of the forces against him and a species of megalomania, which possessed him after his first successes both in '70 and '85, prevented him from making a good use of that party. The brutal murder of Scott—an act for which it is impossible to find a reasonable motive—set Ontario in a flame, and led to the Red River expedition; after which Riel was induced to leave the country privately—£300 being given to him for that purpose by the Canadian Government and an equal amount to his

chief supporter, Lepine!—as the excitement in Quebec, and the fact that the French half-breeds still believed in him, rendered a prosecution unadvisable.

Almost as soon as the new régime was established in Manitoba (whose capital and only town at that time now came to be called Winnipeg) an attempt was made to settle the grievances of the half-breeds. It was arranged that “scrip”\* should be issued to every “native” in the North-West, such scrip entitling the holder to choose 160 acres of land on any quarter-section already surveyed. Those already living in parishes were allowed to choose their lands *en bloc*, so that old neighbours and friends might not be separated. Unfortunately this scrip could be sold (if it had been made inalienable much future difficulty would have been avoided!), and in nine cases out of ten it was sold at once and for a mere trifle. This seeming recklessness is easily explained. For two years their ordinary occupations (trading, buffalo-running, freighting, and so forth) had been interrupted, and

\* North-Western real estate dealers often have scrip to sell, by buying which land may be purchased more cheaply than if cash were paid. Supposing a settler wishes to buy 160 acres at \$3 per acre from the Dominion, he may be able to buy scrip entitling him to choose 160 acres of land anywhere for \$400, and may with this purchase the land he requires at a saving of \$80.

when they resumed them after the excitement and uncertainty they found that all their old-time ways of life were swept away. Trading and farming were out of the question for those who had no credit, and the temptation of selling their birthright for a little ready cash (as little as five dollars was taken for a farm) proved irresistible. And in the end most of them hitched up their ox-carts and travelled across the high prairies into "God's Country," as they called the valley of Saskatchewan, hoping to live out their lives there untroubled by the sight of the Canadian invaders, and untrammelled by a civilization for which they had no desire.

The northward flight of these half-breeds and the Great Trek of the Boers form a curious historical parallel, not only as far as the migrations are concerned, but also with regard to the results.

A few years later, however, the settlement of Saskatchewan and Northern Alberta began, and the hated surveyor again appeared among them. Stories of the rich placer-diggings on the Saskatchewan north branch (even now a man may wash out two dollars a day on certain bars) brought a number to Edmonton and Prince Albert ; and, as often happened in the North-West, those who came to find "flour gold" were content to remain and

raise flour. As early as 1877 the Scotch half-breeds petitioned the Government to instruct the surveyors to respect the boundaries of their holdings, and from that time to the outbreak in 1885 the old settlers and half-breeds of the further North-West kept sending in these petitions—to none of which they received any answer whatever.

The sequel is a matter of modern history—too modern, indeed, to require re-telling. But there are one or two points (generally overlooked owing to the fact that no historian has hitherto taken the trouble to collect information from the half-breeds themselves) worth mentioning here. Thus, in addition to the unwise conduct of the surveyors, the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the railway from Regina to Prince Albert had deprived three hundred half-breeds, who were engaged in freighting goods across the Plains to Winnipeg, of their means of livelihood. Secondly, during his long and poverty-stricken exile in Montana, Riel, though a teacher at St. Peter's Mission, had had secret dreams of overthrowing the Roman Catholic influence over the French half-breeds; and no sooner had he arrived than he began to pose as the apostle of a new and mysterious religion. Thus he ordered all persons butchering cattle to save the blood for him, and from the first day of January,

1885, he fed exclusively on blood cooked in milk. Afterwards he daily related accounts of his conversation with angels (sent to him as to God's envoy), and would read from a book (which he called the "Prophecy of St. Bridget") passages foretelling the overthrow of all worldly governments in 1885 and 1886, and the redemption of the world by a descendant of St. Louis—none other than Louis Riel. These dark sayings produced a wonderful impression on the superstitious men about him ; so that even now there lingers a belief among the Saskatchewan half-breeds that it was not Riel, but a sort of ghost with substance, or *simulacrum*, that was hanged, and that some day the true Riel will return and restore the old order of things.

Also, in 1885, Riel found at hand a man of real military capacity—Gabriel Dumont ; and either because he believed his own prophecies (like many another, a course of deceiving others led to self-deception), or because he believed that British and Canadian forces could not be brought so far north, he made up his mind for war from the first. He is known to have sent messengers to all the Indian Reserves in the neighbourhood, and but for the fact that he was compelled to show his hand before the leaves were on the trees (so providing fodder for horses and permitting the bands to move), nearly

all the Indians would have risen, and most, if not all, of the North-Western settlements have been destroyed. Mr. Goldwin Smith's definition of Riel (written in a letter to the present writer) as "half patriot, half impostor," is therefore correct; to it we may add that if he was a patriot in 1870 (when he undoubtedly served his people), he was an impostor in 1885.

In 1885, the plan of settling the Indians on a large number of isolated reserves (a very practical example of the Imperial adage, *Divide et impera*, that became practicable after the practical extinction of the buffalo) had been completed; the North-West Mounted Police, the finest and most chivalrous force of its kind in the empire, already controlled most of the further North-West; and the Canadian Pacific Railway—the main bond at the time between the members of Confederation—was practically finished. But for these institutions of government, the outbreak of 1885 might easily have assumed the proportions of some of the Indian wars in the Western States; for there is no doubt the Saskatchewan Indians would have risen, had they had time to do so.

Really the Manitoba of to-day dates from 1881—the year which saw the entry of the Canadian Pacific Railway into Winnipeg. The ten previous



years were a period of transition, during which immigration and capital flowed in very slowly, and farming on a large scale was impossible owing to the great cost of bringing in modern machinery. In 1881, also, began the famous Land Boom. Early in 1881 certain lots of land in the vicinity of the railway station were sold at considerably increased prices, and owners of adjacent properties began to ask huge sums for them. Before the end of that year land-values were enormously inflated, and at the beginning of 1882 Winnipeg was crowded with a throng of speculators from every part of the world. From this centre the Boom radiated all over the North-West, towns being surveyed in every part, not only of Manitoba, but also of the Territories. Small parcels of land, large enough to hold a house, fetched 10,000 dollars to 20,000 dollars, and there is an uninhabited desolate flat at the junction of the branches of the Saskatchewan, which was once worth 500 dollars an acre, and is now worth nothing at all. A railway conductor, who took a trip to the end of the Canadian Pacific Railway line, felicitously described the state of things in that wonderful year. Asked what he had seen—"The greatest country I ever struck!" he replied. "There are hundreds of towns and cities between Winnipeg

and Moosejaw, and it takes a rich man to own the ground under his shoes in those places. *Wherever there's a siding, that's a town; and where there's a siding and a tank, that's a city!*"

A blockade for some days by snow and floods led to the sudden bursting of this "Prairie Bubble;" the gamblers stampeded, values fell 99 per cent., and two hundred "real estate" offices shut up shop. Those who had held on to their land found they possessed a farm or two without the capital to work it; most of those who had sold at the height of the Boom—when "paper" had taken the place of cash, a sure sign of financial disease in the West—found they had something wherewith to kindle their fires; and a few who had been content with cent. per cent. profits, and had sold early, rejoiced in the possession of fortunes. Many years passed before the North-West recovered from the commercial lethargy which followed this attack of land-fever.

## CHAPTER V

### THE NORTH-WEST OF TO-DAY

IN the North-West, as in all other new countries of the world, political and economic mistakes have proved more serious obstacles to industrial progress than the natural disadvantages of climate and remoteness. The bursting of the Prairie Bubble of 1881-82, the issue of transferable scrip to the half-breeds, the payment of huge Government subsidies to railway companies in land instead of cash—for all these blunders a penalty has been imposed. The financial catastrophe which followed the epidemic of land-fever resulted in the withdrawal from settlement of millions of acres of the choicest lands (much of which is still patiently held by speculators, who hope to get their money back after many years), and scared away innumerable immigrants and a vast amount of what may be called immigrant capital. The failure to make the half-breeds' scrip inalienable was indirectly the

cause of the rebellion of 1885, which, though it drew the attention of the world to the North-West, was at best a left-handed sort of advertisement; moreover, even now, the old half-breeds' reserves—the choicest lands in Manitoba—are mostly held by speculators, who bought them in the boom years from those who, morally speaking, stole them a decade before. As for the handing over by the Dominion Government of nearly half the acreage of the "Fertile Belt" to the Canadian Pacific, Hudson's Bay, and other transportation and trading companies, that policy—though from the Imperial point of view it may be largely justified—has probably done more to retard the growth of "Greater Canada" than any and every other blunder of Canada's politicians. At the time when Sir John Macdonald introduced the Imperial note into Canadian politics it seemed more than probable that the United States would succeed in "Americanizing" the North-West. Thus, in the report by a committee of the United States Senate on Pacific railways, published in 1869, it was said: "The opening by us first of a North Pacific railroad seals the destiny of the British possessions west of the 91st meridian. They will become so Americanized in interests and feelings that they will be in effect severed from the new Dominion,

and the question of their annexation will be but a question of time." So the statesmen of the Union hoped, and so feared Sir John Macdonald, the keenest living spectator of the affairs of that republic. Confederation and its corollary—a trans-continental railway—seemed to him an immediate necessity; and, happy in his opportunity, happier still in his personality, he succeeded in persuading even his opponents to take the same view. And, besides the desire to preserve the North-West to the empire, another idea constrained him and, through him, nine out of every ten Canadians of whatsoever party. He saw that the success of the Union was ultimately due to the astonishing growth of the Western and Pacific States, and he foresaw that the farm-lands of Manitoba and the mining camps of British Columbia—to say nothing of the fertile wilderness between—would provide employment for the manufacturing and shipping industries of the East, as well as a field wherein a man might invest his capital, or, if he had no money, his own manhood. And though for many years confederation was rather a machine than an organism (inter-provincial disputes playing too prominent a part in politics for the national feeling to grow quickly), and his visions of a great Western market for Eastern products—and *vice versa* a great

Eastern market for Western produce—were regarded as a species of political mirage, at last the machine is finding a soul, and day by day it becomes clearer that the mirage was, after all, the reflection of a prosperity that really existed—only further away in the future than the “Fathers of Confederation” saw it.

But a necessary evil is none the less an evil. Though it was arranged that the lands held by the companies should be sold at a uniform price—three dollars an acre as a rule, though it is always possible to buy a whole section at something over two dollars—yet it was not to be expected that immigrants would make a practice of purchasing lands. The man who emigrates from the Eastern provinces or from Europe is usually young and without means—if it were not so he would not leave home—and hardly one in a hundred of those who have settled in the North-West during the five years the writer has known it personally would have been able to buy a farm. The result is that in nearly every part of the country the land belonging to the companies, or sold by them to speculators—out of thirty-six sections in a township the odd-numbered eighteen are invariably the property of some railway or other corporation, only the other eighteen being open to free settlement—

remains unsold and unused, so that farms appear small oases of cultivation in a wilderness of virgin prairie ; neighbours live so far apart that no one has time to be neighbourly ; settlements outside the towns and villages on the railways are small and straggling ; co-operation for the establishment of churches, schools, creameries, cheese-factories, etc., and for the bettering of roads, is more often than not impossible ; and the necessity of hauling grain to market over long distances cuts down the profit of the year's work to a very great degree. This does not now apply so much to Manitoba, where the farmers are often big enough men to buy the land adjacent to their homesteads, as to the North-West territories ; but even there the withdrawal of land from free settlement is still an obvious evil—so obvious, indeed, as to be often overlooked, not only by travellers, but also by residents. What it really amounts to in the Territories may be illustrated by the following few facts about the settlement in which the writer at present resides. The area of that district—triangular in form, and separated from others in Saskatchewan by two rivers and a belt of pine woods—is more than 100 square miles, of which area a third—say 20,000 acres—is good farm land. There are only 35 “yards” to be threshed out, and this year's crop



—a good one—amounted to between 13,000 and 14,000 bushels of all sorts of grain. The average distances of a farm from the nearest market is 30 miles, and 50 bushels of wheat forms the maximum load for a “team” or pair of horses, and bob-sleighs. At present prices that quantity of good wheat is worth \$30, of which amount about \$11 may be taken as nett profit. Now, it takes two days to market the wheat and bring back its value in money or supplies; that being so, how much does the farmer who makes that journey in winter earn over and above his wages? It is certain that but for the profit on cattle, which can carry themselves to market and eat the railway company’s hay without paying rent, there would be nobody farming in that district. And it is equally certain that but for the fact that many thousands of fat acres within easy reach of town are held by the railway company or by speculators, nobody would ever have farmed there at all—at least, not until those reserves had been filled up.

Hundreds of similar instances could be given. For, great as is the area of the North-West, only a small and well-defined part of it—the “Fertile Belt,” which is a ribbon of territory of varying breadth, including the valleys of the Assiniboine and Red River, the valleys of the two branches of

the "blue" Saskatchewan, and most of Alberta—possesses the soil and climate suitable for raising the staple cereals. And of this fertile belt only a small portion has railway communication within reasonable distance, and is, therefore, ready for settlement at present. And of that small portion half—and that half scattered here and there and everywhere—is practically reserved.

Another evil growth from the same root is the system, now condemned by most North-Western authorities, who are beginning to see that "the best immigration agent is a contented settler," of advertisement by means of pamphlets. Most people must have seen the sort of thing—a neat little book with a gaudy cover, and full inside of glowing testimonies to the phenomenal fertility of the country. If the people responsible for the issue and circulation of these pamphlets had ever seen them read and heard them discussed by a knot of experienced English farmers, the futility of the system would have been recognized at once. No doubt a few have been brought to the North-West by their means; certainly many more have been kept away. Though these pamphlets were circulated under Government auspices, yet their existence is primarily due to the companies with land to sell, who were naturally anxious to bring

in immigrants with money to spend. These companies, employing large numbers of men, and in former years practically compelling their employees to vote as they thought fit, had extraordinary influence with the Government, and used this influence to help on their business. Thus the pamphlet system seems to have originated with the Canadian Pacific Railway, of which powerful company it used to be said "the Cabinet ministers ride to Ottawa on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and when they are there the Canadian Pacific Railway rides on them." Even now the companies are in the habit of engineering booms on a small scale in order to sell their lands. Thus, in journeying to the Saskatchewan country in the spring of 1895, the writer and two friends were offered free passes to the Edmonton district, which was just then being boomed by the Canadian Pacific Railway, and advertised in special pamphlets. The Canadian Pacific Railway land agents had no interest in Prince Albert (where the land is owned by another company), and said as much, refusing to give any information about the Saskatchewan country. After all, the Edmonton district is as good as most, and not many suffered loss when the bottom fell out of the boomlet, while the Canadian Pacific Railway sold thousands of acres

at prices as high as fifteen dollars an acre. But previous jobs of this kind, such as the attempts to obtain settlers for portions of Western Manitoba and Eastern Assiniboia, which suffered from a lack of rainfall, and are now admitted to form part of an "arid region" of the North-West, have inflicted great loss on large numbers of small capitalists.

In the eighties, farming in Manitoba was just a gamble in wheat ; that is to say, the average farmer rushed in a large crop of wheat, and then sat down and prayed for suitable weather, high prices, and a "bonanza crop." Dairy-work, stock-breeding, etc., were entirely neglected ; so that butter, bacon, cheese, and so forth, were actually imported from the East. A course of low prices in the world's markets, two or three bad seasons, and the inability of even the rich prairie soil to stand many consecutive years of wheat-cropping, has put an end to this state of things ; so that nowadays the successful Manitoban generally practises "mixed farming," with a natural and not unwise tendency to rely on his wheat-fields as a main source of profit. The ordinary Manitoba farmer compares not unfavourably with the better of his rivals in Ontario and the United States, and though he is not so well educated in the niceties of his profession as the British agriculturist, he can make money, *for he*

*has no rent to pay!* Moreover, though he has to pay a high price for labour—the ordinary wages paid for skilled “help” may be taken as twenty to twenty-five dollars a month, with board and lodging, worth another ten dollars—he gets for his money, not a mere *farm-hand* like the “right good turmut-hower” of the old English song, but a man with a mind, who can turn his hand to almost any kind of work, and be trusted to do it to the best of his ability, even when his employer is not watching. The all-round superiority of the North-Western “hired man” to his compeer in the Middle and Western States (who is already obliged to work fifteen or sixteen hours a day for as many dollars a month, and is rapidly falling to the status of the European farm-hand) is a fact that has been much noticed of late, and has been variously explained. In the American West—the “mortgaged West,” as it was so often called during the last presidential election—not only are there no longer any “free homesteads” left, but the price of unimproved land is so high, averaging twice that of very similar land across the boundary line, that the settler who wishes to make a farm must have a fair amount of capital, and can hope for only a small interest on his investment. This state of things is, in the main, a result of the system of aiding railway

extension by State land-grants—a system pushed to such extremes that in several States the railway companies held at one time or other a monopoly of the soil—followed by innumerable “land booms,” many of them much greater affairs and more disastrous in their consequences than any that have occurred above the line. Various other evils of first-rate importance and peculiar to the American West—the universal corruption of local and State politics owing to the universal “spoils system,” the many failures of “National” and “Popular” banks due to unsound banking methods, the commercial immorality of the business classes in general and in particular of the “storekeeper at the cross-roads,” who supplies the farmer with necessities on the security of his next harvest, and the tardy recognition of the periodic climate of many vast districts, where the lack of rainfall has had to be supplemented by great schemes of irrigation, often only partially successful—have also helped to impoverish the farmer of the Western States, and to reduce him, and with him, of course, his hired dependent, to their position of inferiority to the settler in Manitoba and the North-West. One very significant fact which should be noticed, but is generally overlooked by travellers through North America, is that, whereas as often as not the “hired man” in

the Western States is married and the father of a family, in the Canadian North-West he is almost invariably a bachelor. The latter knows that before the time comes for him to marry and settle down he will have saved enough to take up and start work on a quarter section of Government land, paying only a registration fee of ten dollars for that privilege, and live on his own farm. The former, on the other hand, can have no such certain hope; and it is too often his fate to work all his days on another man's land, while his wife serves in another man's house.

Southern Alberta—aforetime the favourite pasturage of the buffalo, and now one of the best ranching countries in the world—is, next to Manitoba, the most highly developed part of the North-West. In the early eighties, when this corner of the great plains began to be settled by cattle-men from Montana—who saw that the climate was so mild that stock could be allowed to run at large all winter, and that the prairie grasses gradually cured by the autumn chinooks are as good feed for cattle as they were for buffalo—the ranchers had very crude ideas of their business, little or no attention being paid to the breeding of good cattle or horses, dairy-work being utterly neglected, and the breaking-in of horses being entrusted to rough



and ignorant "broncho-busters." The stress of a world-wide competition, and the progress of education in all matters pertaining to agriculture, have brought about the adoption of more scientific methods, besides which the rancher's business has received material benefit from the vigorous "agricultural policy" of the Dominion Government during the last few years, such measures as the Irrigation Act of 1894, and the furnishing of facilities for cold storage, being great boons to the cattle-man. Since 1894 more than 150,000 acres within the "arid region" mentioned above have received irrigation, so that in numerous cases the rancher, who had to import the grain he required from Manitoba, now raises it for himself, or saves the freight by purchasing it near at hand; and the cold storage system, when finally complete, will remove the effects of the blow given to his industry by the exclusion from Great Britain of Canadian cattle.

The reader who thinks or has thought of emigrating should now be able to strike a balance of the advantages and disadvantages of the agricultural North-West as a field for the investment of himself and whatever capital he may possess. Presumably he knows the value of himself better than the writer, so that it may be presumption on

the latter's part to say anything about that part—*always the more important*—of the investment. But it must be laid down as a rule, without exception, that the really successful settler is not only able-bodied but also able-minded; so that young gentlemen who have failed to pass examinations need not think that fact is a title to success. And another rule, with few exceptions in the writer's experience, is that nobody should come out after his thirtieth birthday; for at that age man lacks time, even if he has the faculty, to learn the ways and customs of a new country. Given youth and a sound mind in a sound body, the would-be emigrant to the North-West has what experience proves to be worth more than almost any amount of money in hand. Indeed, the possession of capital—especially if it takes the form of a "remittance" or yearly allowance given by parents—is a dangerous thing, and has more often than not led to failure, particularly with young fellows who have been brought up in comfortable middle-class homes. The phenomenon is easily explained. There are no conventions in a new country—in Nor'-Western parlance, "there's nobody holding you"—and with those newly released from conventions liberty is apt to become license, unless hard work all the time is absolutely required.

The fate, however, of those who lack the North-Western virtues of "grit" (physical and moral endurance), "git" (physical and intellectual alertness), and "git up" (self-respect: a phrase firstly applied to a horse with a good action, and secondly to the man who walks erect), is well described in the following extract from a North-Western writer's essay thereon. That essay was entitled "Pasturelands for Black Sheep," and should be read by every parent who thinks of sending a ne'er-do-well into the American West; for there is true humour—truth and humour—in every word of it.

"Presently," says the essayist, "he becomes untidy in his dress and habits. Is not the West a free country, and must not a man shun the soap-dish and hair-brush, except on festal occasions, if he wants to be known as a worker and not a 'dude'? Also, he begins to maltreat the language of his birthright. Around him he hears people saying, 'I seen it,' 'We was,' etc., and gradually and almost insensibly he glides into the same slipshod style of speech. Free country again—free to choose your grammar. And before long he begins to wonder if the old notions learned in the 'old country' may not have been wrong. Old notions as to propriety of dress, speech, and manners, the old oil of politeness which makes the wheels of

social life run smoothly—what need of all that in a new country?

“And so the successful farmer, in whose house are books, musical instruments, cultured women, ceases to offer him work even at threshing-time, and he gravitates as ‘chore-boy’ to some lower-class American home. There he sees the first fruits of the ‘What-does-it-matter-in-a-new-country?’ theory; for the children there have license to say or do anything they please, and the things they please to say and do are thorns in his flesh as long as he is a tenderfoot. Only one restriction is placed upon their liberty—shame that this should be so in a free country!—and this sole restriction is that they cannot choose their own parents.

“And consider the pleasant, intellectual evenings, when the talk drones along, confined to crops, trails, horses, and stock-raising. Yes, the natural history of the cow palls upon one after a while. Oh, those dreary, long-winded yarns, when the mittens and socks were steaming round the stove, pointless and uninteresting as the lowing of oxen! And yet, the man who tells them has a right to bore you—is it not a free country?—and if you don’t like it you may go and find somebody else to give you board and an occasional plug of T and

B or pair of mitts in exchange for your performance day by day (seven days a week) of all the dull bits of work known as 'chores.' "

As regards openings other than agricultural, there are practically none for the new arrival. "Canada for the Canadians" is a rule of conduct in the case of public appointments; and the open professions — especially law — are terribly overcrowded. Clerks and other mechanical brain-workers are not wanted anywhere. And it would be the height of folly for a new-comer, even with a sound commercial training, who has not spent some years in the country, to invest himself and his money in any line of business, from politics (a profession in the North-West, worse luck!) up to brick-making.

There remains agriculture in all its branches, and the immigrant, whether he has much or little capital, will do well to work two or three years on other men's farms before starting on his own account. A training at a Colonial College does a young man no harm, but it is a question whether it is worth the time and money. The writer is inclined to think that a farm in some colony is the best sort of Colonial College, for the professors there ask no fees for their vigorous and practical lectures, and loafing of any sort is quite impossible.

If the would-be North-Western farmer *must* go to college, why not send him to an agricultural college in Canada? The expense will be smaller and the learning acquired more to the point; and the successful student will obtain a diploma which may enable him to obtain such berths as that of manager to a Government "creamery"—berths which are never given to men trained in the mother country, and are well worth having for a time.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FAR WEST

IN British Columbia (at first known as New Caledonia), as everywhere else in the North-West, the earliest pioneers were fur traders; it was not, however, until 1858, when the first and greatest invasion of gold-seekers took place, that the importance of the so-called "Sea of Mountains" was generally recognized. That Canada possesses her splendid province on the Pacific, that the Empire's moiety of the "Gold Belt" of North America—a claim covering half a million square miles, and having the Kootenay at one end and Klondike at the other—did not lapse to the United States is directly due to the Hudson's Bay Company, the inheritor and representative of all previous fur-trading concerns. The servants of the company in charge of the New Caledonia department undertook the most fatiguing explorations in their efforts to extend the fur trade, and though their operations were carried on at a loss—the fur trade was never



profitable on that side of the Rockies, partly because of the difficulty of sending in supplies, and partly owing to the covert hostility of the Indians—the company, recognizing the importance of maintaining British influence on the Columbia River, never entertained the idea of withdrawing. For several decades they were the only civilized occupants of both banks of the Columbia; and it is not their fault that nowadays that river does not flow wholly through British territory. In 1839, when Alaska was leased from the Russians, the company had established factories at all likely spots from Behring Sea to San Francisco; and they held their ground in Oregon and Washington Territory until compelled to relinquish their hold by the Treaty of 1846, at which time, but for the belief in Great Britain that the countries in question were practically valueless, both Oregon and Washington, and even Alaska, perhaps, might have been retained under the British flag for a small consideration.

It is not generally known that the first discovery of gold in British Columbia occurred in 1852—six years before the great rush to the Fraser River—at Mitchell Harbour, on the west coast of the Queen Charlotte Islands. The story of that long-forgotten episode may suggest to the modern

prospector a new field for his efforts. In 1861 a nugget was picked up on the beach by an Indian woman, and, after a part had been cut off, was taken by the Indians to Fort Simpson, and sold there to the company's agent. From Fort Simpson it was sent to Fort Victoria (then, as now, the Hudson's Bay Company's headquarters on the coast) with the story of its find, and instructions to send a ship to the place where it was found. Accordingly that same year the brigantine *Una* was despatched to Mitchell Harbour, where a quartz-vein, seven inches wide, and containing in places twenty-five per cent. of gold, was traced for eighty feet. Some of the quartz was blasted out and shipped; but unfortunately it never reached Fort Victoria, the *Una* being lost on the return voyage near Cape Flattery. Next year a United States brigantine named the *Orbit*, which lay on the rocks in Esquimault Harbour, was bought by the company, and sent north with thirty miners in addition to the crew, the miners going "on cahoots" in their venture, or, in other words, receiving a half-share of the profits. Three months were spent in getting a cargo of the quartz, which was eventually sent to England. These miners received thirty dollars a month each as their share of the venture, and this becoming known in San Francisco, a fleet of tiny

vessels left that port for the Queen Charlotte Islands. These particular Argonauts seem to have been a turbulent lot, for H.M.S. *Thetis* had to be sent up to keep order between them and the Indians, who had mustered there in great numbers. Excepting the *Susan Sturgess* (whose skipper was named Rooney, the same being "a very handy man with hair on his wrists") none of these ships got anything of a cargo, and even the *Susan Sturgess* was not altogether successful; for, though Mr. Rooney obtained fourteen hundred dollars for his first cargo, on a second visit his vessel was captured and looted by the Indians at Masset, and he and his crew kept prisoners till the Hudson's Bay Company's steamer *Beaver* brought them off.

Though this vein seems to have yielded gold to the value of forty-five thousand dollars (most of which sank with the *Una*), no excitement in California resulted from this discovery; which is curious, seeing that any sort of a tale—such as that, for instance, of the "sea washing up gold on the shores of Humboldt County, so that an able-bodied man with a wheelbarrow could depend upon making a fortune in a week"—was sufficient at that time to set the forty-niners on a stampede.

In 1855, however, a servant of the ubiquitous

Hudson's Bay Company found gold near Fort Colville, and fairly rich diggings began to be worked there. Indians from the Thompson River, visiting a woman of their tribe who was married to a French Canadian at Walla Walla, spread the report that gold like that found at Colville occurred also in their hunting-grounds; and in the summer of 1857 four or five French half-breeds crossed over to the Thompson, and found workable placers at Nicoamen, nine miles above the mouth of that river. On the return of these prospectors, news of their discoveries spread all along the coast, and created great excitement in California, at that time swarming with gold-seekers from every part of the world, most of whom were "on the bed-rock" of their fortunes owing to the playing-out of the Californian placers after nearly ten years' working. Between March and June, 1858, twenty-three thousand persons arrived by sea from San Francisco to Fort Victoria, and converted that place from a very quiet little village of two or three hundred souls to a very noisy and populous city of tents. At the same time another eight thousand tried to make their way in by overland routes from the south. But the country being entirely without routes (except the rivers, and those are not easily navigated in canoes and dug-outs),

and altogether unprovided with food for the support of so many, all but two or three thousand returned to California before the following January. It is said that at least a thousand persons perished in the course of this exodus. Meanwhile, however, the auriferous bars and bench-lands in the neighbourhood of Hope and Yale on the Lower Fraser were already being worked—with such success that the value of the actual shipments from Victoria during the first five months of development in 1858 amounted to five hundred and forty-three thousand dollars.

The dust of the Lower Fraser was fine or “flour” gold ; and the theory of the Californians, who got most of it, was that it originated in richer deposits higher up the river. This theory, though not scientifically correct, led the more energetic to push their way into the interior, until in 1860 the famous Cariboo district was entered upon. 1861 saw the discovery of “coarse gold” on Lightning and Williams Creeks, a pair of gold-bearing streams comparable in point of richness with Eldorado and Bonanza of the Yukon gold-fields ; and a second migration of gold-hunters towards the province, which continued until 1864, and included adventurers from England, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. One consequence of the “Cariboo rush”

was to drain all the other placer-mining camps in the province, even those diggings which were returning good "pay" being forsaken, and allowed to fall into the hands of Indians and the inevitable Chinaman.

A series of smaller rushes, ever tending towards the north, took place in the next twenty years. Thus in 1863 rich placers were found in the Kootenay country; in 1864 Leech River, in Vancouver Island, was found to be auriferous; in 1865 the Big Bend of the Columbia was invaded; in 1869 the Omenica district—still that one of the mining regions of British Columbia most difficult to reach, and most costly to live in—began to be worked; and in 1872 the very rich mines of the Cassiar district—next to Cariboo the "goldenest name" in British Columbia—were revealed; all other fields, except Cariboo, being forsaken in their favour. Finally, the British Columbian placer-miner found his way into the basin of the Yukon about 1880.

The value of the gold yielded by the placer-miners of British Columbia from 1858 to 1888 (inclusive) was about \$54,200,000, the average number of placer-miners at work during those thirty years being 2775. It follows that the yearly earnings per man averaged about \$630—that is to

say, little more than a grub-stake at the best of times, and a good deal less in such seasons of scarcity as the height of the Cariboo and Cassiar "rushes." The writer has been at the pains to work out a similar average from similar statistics applying to certain of the Western and Pacific States ; and, with the exception of the Californians in the ten years 1849-1858, none of these States armies of free miners have done so well as the British Columbians. Any number of reasons could be given for this statistical fact or fantasy ; the one chosen by the writer—and it is entirely a matter of choice, there being others just as reasonable or unreasonable—is that, next to California and the Klondike, there is no richer gold-field in North America than that included within the limits of British Columbia.

On the foregoing statistics, moreover, may be based a word of thanks to that honest, hardworking fellow—the old-time prospector for placer mines. Mr. Bret Harte has drawn the character of the California "forty-niner" for all time ; but as yet the British Columbian "fifty-eight" has not received recognition from the writers of romance. And yet he well deserves it, for no man ever did more work for less pay towards the making of a country. To put it in a business way, this bearer



of pick and pan has in return for a mere "grub-stake," and at the risk of his life, explored the whole of the "Sea of Mountains," and with his companions given us what may be called the preliminary "assay-map" of half the Cordillera Belt. For nearly all the great quartz-mines of North America—and without a quartz-mine no really permanent mining settlement is possible—have been discovered by tracing alluvial deposits of gold to their point of origin in the mother rock; so that the records of placers found and worked along the myriad creeks and rivers of British Columbia are of vital interest to the mining expert, who without them could do next to nothing towards opening up the country.

The "fifty-eight" was, and is, in his way, as romantic a character as the typical Argonaut drawn by Bret Harte and his many disciples. Though he did not shoot at sight and gamble quite so wildly as the forty-niners—for in the old Cariboo days Sir Matthew Begbie, that fearless and indefatigable awarder of justice, taught him once and for all the value of a man's life in English law, and his earnings were never sufficient to admit of very much "bucking agin the tiger"—yet the annals of his struggles with Nature and Nature's children and foster-children—bears and Indians,

for instance — contain episodes as dramatic as any of Bret Harte's tales of the first Argonauts. Instead of duels with derringers, we hear of battles fought with the coast Indians, who were 75,000 strong, according to Sir George Simpson, in 1857 ; and instead of that quaint childishness of thought which runs like a gold-bearing quartz-stringer through the living rock of the Californian manhood, we seem to notice a certain veil of grim humour, a result no doubt of their constant intercourse with Nature in a wilder and more malignant mood. The following story of a tenderfoot's conversion is pretty fair "spec'men quartz" from this vein as yet unworked by the professional humourist. It appears there was a little camp called "Root Hog or Die" (very streaky diggings there !) on the Thompson in the sixties. Most of the miners there knew how to deal with the Indian plague ; so that the appearance of a new-comer, who confessed that he had in his life never killed an Indian, was bitterly resented. Soon enough, however, the new arrival became tired of "eatin' crow at all three meals ;" and, taking a gun loaded with buckshot, set out to repair the omission in his education. After a long search he came upon three old squaws picking blueberries with wooden scoops on a little rising hill ; and, "slipping up on 'em, as a man

slips up on a covey o' chicken, waited till they crawled into line, an' then let fly. Walking up, he saw the first was dead, an' the second was deader, but the third—she was still openin' an' shuttin' her eyes like machin'ry. He looks at her a while, an' then he ses, 'I guess,' ses he, quiet-like, 'I won't waste a charge on you.' So he went back to camp and told the boys, who gave him drinks and praised him, though there wasn't one as c'u'dn't ha' done as much an' more."

The old-time placer-miners seldom or never looked for quartz-veins ; for they lacked the scientific knowledge to "prove" such discoveries, and also they knew it was impossible to bring in the necessary machinery for working them when proved. It costs both time and money to find out the extent of a vein ; so that when their bar or bench was worked out they would leave it and make for other placer-diggings, or try for a new discovery. And as for silver and silver-ores, these unlearned gold-hunters had a hearty contempt for such matters. In view of the fact that the argenterious galenas of the Slocan pay a better percentage on capital outlay even than the auriferous sulphides of Trail Creek, and that in Dr. Dawson's opinion British Columbia is even greater as a silver country than as a gold-field, this conduct, though

justifiable at a time when ore could not be freighted out nor a single smelter be built, strikes one as foolish. Still, the British Columbian never attained to the folly of the old-time Nevadan, who, working his way up the flanks of Mount Davidson, and washing out a little gold from time to time, used to swear at a curious "blue-black clay" which often clogged up his rocker, never dreaming that the same was really the detritus from the outcrop of the wonderful Comstock lode, and worth about six thousand dollars a ton.

Next to the little standing army of placer-miners, British Columbia owes most to the Canadian Geological Survey. The maps and papers issued since 1870 by that admirably conducted body of experts are valuable, not only to the geologist, but also to the practical miner. That they are neglected by the latter is probably due to the fact that they have never been published in a handy and accessible form ; so that the seeker after information about any particular district finds it necessary to examine a very large number of maps and reports before he gets at what he wants. Nevertheless, the search, though it cost both time and trouble, should always be made, for it is really extraordinary how many of the successes of practical mining in the Far West have been foretold years before by

the officers of the Survey. Thus the real value of the Trail Creek and Slocan mines in West Kootenay was pointed out at a time when the shares in the best of them were regarded as so much spoilt paper ; and ten years before the Klondike discoveries, Dr. Dawson, the director of the Survey, drew attention to the opportunities offered by the Yukon basin as a field for prospecting, and prophesied the finding there of richer deposits of "coarse gold" than any known to exist at that time.

As valuable in a different way as the detailed studies of particular areas are the general observations of the geology of the province to be found in these much-neglected publications. Such general considerations of theory, combined with knowledge of the results of practical mining in British Columbia and the Western and Pacific States, enable us to estimate the future of the Far West—a matter which every investor in railways, trading companies, etc., must take into account. Suffice it to say for the moment that these considerations support the saying of the Coast miners: "If the head of the rat is in Alaska and its tail in Montana, the body lies in British Columbia."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FAR WEST OF TO-DAY

BEFORE discussing the Kootenay boom of 1895-96, and the present position of reef-mining in British Columbia, something must be said concerning the future of placer-mining within the boundaries of that province.

In the first place, the discovery of new gold-bearing creeks may be expected to occur from time to time. The portions of the lengths of individual streams which have been found to contain large quantities of gold are so small—generally from one to three miles—that, even in the case of well-known water-courses, paying deposits may have been overlooked by the old-time prospectors. Still more likely is it that such sins of omission may have been committed in the case of less accessible streams, many of which have never been carefully explored. The discovery of "coarse gold" in Granite Creek in 1885—Granite Creek runs

through the heart of the Similkameen district, and must have been passed by hundreds of hungry gold-seekers between that year and 1860—is a good instance of the unexpected finding of a rich “old bed;” and the recognition of the auriferous qualities of Coyoooh Creek (first worked in 1886) is yet another case in point. It is more than probable that when the prospector turns his attention once again to the more “away back” regions of the Gold and Coast Ranges—for some years past these have been neglected in favour of Kootenay and Klondike—other “strikes” of this nature will be made. But we cannot hope for a second Cariboo; that would be too much to ask of Fortune!

Secondly, it is certain that modern machinery and modern engineering will eventually permit of the profitable working of the vast stretches of auriferous gravels, which could not be touched by individuals working with primitive appliances—rockers, long toms, or even sluice-boxes—at a time when the cost of supplies and labour was very high. The extension of the railway system of the province will assuredly bring about a great increase of hydraulic mining; for even now, in spite of the cost of labour there (from two to four dollars a day, and the cost of other necessary



supplies are in proportion), companies formed for the purpose of utilizing the poorer gravels and the tailings left by old-time "haymakers" in Cariboo and elsewhere are doing more than paying expenses.

Another point which deserves to be considered in this connection is the possibility of further exploring the deep buried channels of such streams as Lightning, Williams, Cunningham, and Antler Creeks in Cariboo, only portions of which have hitherto been worked owing to the lack of sufficiently powerful pumping machinery and of the capital required for drainage operations on a large scale. There are also many valleys where, though the bed of the existing stream has proved rich in gold, the old channel has never yet been "bottomed" for the same reason. As soon as these localities are brought within reach by railways, capital will be forthcoming for such explorations; at present, however, the cost of such investigations is practically prohibitive.

Thirdly, it is more than probable that placer deposits, differing in age and character from those which have hitherto been worked in the province, will be discovered. During the period of the Middle Tertiary a great part of British Columbia (nearly all that portion between the Gold and Coast Ranges) was occupied by vast fresh-water

lakes. These covered and gradually filled with their sediment the systems of drainage produced in the preceding geological age; and into the lakes themselves flowed streams from the surrounding mountain regions, forming here and there great gravel-beds. Towards the close of the Middle Tertiary extensive volcanic action took place, and these sediments and gravel-beds were covered over by vast flows of basalt and other igneous rocks. Since that far-off time new valleys have been cut in these Tertiary deposits, and there is good reason to believe that some of the placers worked within this area have been enriched more by the robbing of the Tertiary sediments and gravel-beds underlying the basalts than by the wearing down of the original rock.

An even more fascinating possibility is the existence of still more venerable placers, resembling the wonderfully rich "fossil placers" of Bendigo and Ballarat, and of conglomerates or "cements," comparable with the auriferous deposits of Mount Morgan in Australia and of the Black Hills of Dakota. There are several localities where geological considerations all but demonstrate the existence of such mines of wealth, and a capitalist might do worse than start boring operations in one or two of these localities.

The Kootenay boom of 1895-96 was mainly a result of the phenomenal success of two great mines—the Le Roi and War Eagle—which turned the attention of the Western miner to the great bodies of sulphides known to exist there, but supposed up to that time to be of too poor a grade and too intractable to be worth working. In 1894, Trail Camp, whose capital is the important town of Rossland, exported \$126,000 worth of ore, and in the following year more than \$1,000,000 worth, while in the first half of the next year (with but one little railway utterly unable to handle the output, and a single smelter within fifteen miles) double as much was shipped away. Naturally thousands of miners and prospectors rushed in from all parts of the West; four thousand claims were staked out in the vicinity of the wonderful creek, some of them being marked out on the snow in the middle of winter, and the prices of shares in the various mines—only half a dozen of which were proved to any extent—were inflated far beyond their true value. Better still, the capitalists of the Western States, who had long had an eye on West Kootenay, set to work to develop the mines by means of large investments, whereas the moneyed men of Montreal and New York would have nothing to do with them. On one occasion a

block of Slocan Star shares (then worth twenty-five cents, par value being one dollar) was refused at any price by a New York dealer in stocks, and the shares were bought for ten cents apiece by a Slocan mine-owner, and sold for two and a half dollars, the profit on the whole transaction being \$30,000, less the fare from New York to Spokane.

Almost as striking as the sudden development of Trail Creek was the development at the same time of the Slocan silver mines, a few miles north of Rossland, where the earnings of sixteen mines during the first half of 1896 exceeded \$1,500,000. Though the richness of the ore (an average specimen contains 120 ozs. of silver and from sixty to seventy per cent. of lead) and the smaller cost of mining renders the Slocan an even more profitable region than the more famous Trail Creek, the boom was never so strong here as in the vicinity of the sulphides, a fact partly due, no doubt, to the superior fascination of the yellow metal and the fallacy—deeply rooted in the average man's mind—that as an ounce of gold is more valuable than an ounce of silver, so a gold mine *must* be worth more than a silver mine. However this may be, most of the work in the Slocan has been done by British and Canadian capital, the capitalist of the Western States having been

imbued with a prejudice against silver mines, owing to the short-lived prosperity of those on his side of the Line. But there can be no doubt now that the galena deposits of the Slocan are practically inexhaustible, and even a further depreciation of the value of silver, equal to that which has taken place in the last quarter of a century, would not render silver-mining unprofitable in the Kaslo, New Denver, and London "camps."

There remain few or no openings for the small capitalist in the Kootenay, and the emigrant without means cannot be recommended to betake himself to Rossland or thereabouts unless he has a practical knowledge of mining, or is assured of employment on his arrival. The writer is convinced, however, that several of the old placer-mining localities (most of which yield but little nowadays, and since the Klondike rush began have been practically deserted by "white" labour) to be found here and there on the Gold Belt of British Columbia, offer numerous good opportunities for educated young men with a little money who are able and willing to work with their hands for a time, and are also capable of acquiring and applying a modicum of scientific knowledge. As has already been pointed out, a large number of famous mines in the Western States have been discovered by

tracing the gold of alluvial diggings to its source in the living rock; and it is really astonishing how little has been done as yet towards solving a series of almost precisely similar problems in British Columbia. Then, again, there are the possibilities, already sufficiently discussed, of new developments in these old placer-mining camps—possibilities which, even where they amount to probabilities, are universally disregarded at present except by an occasional Australian prospector who has seen or heard of a “cement” mine. Even in the Cassiar and Omenica districts (the least accessible of these localities, and therefore the most expensive to live in) a “grub-stake” can still be made by working over the deserted creeks, many of which, so the writer has lately learned on very good authority, still pay as high as five dollars to ten dollars a day to the man with a rocker. Furthermore, in all these districts discoveries of gold-bearing quartz and silver-bearing galenas have been made from time to time, and claims thereon entered, and in some cases—not many—partially developed by the original holder, so that, apart from geological considerations, and the evidence of placer-mining, their general resemblance to the Kootenay “mining camps” has been clearly established.

In spite of its remoteness, the Cassiar district,

which in the ten years, 1873-82, produced \$4,500,000 worth of gold dust, seems to offer the best chances for the scientific prospector. In the years when it was occupied by the little standing army of British Columbian placer-miners the Canadian Pacific Railway did not exist, and the work of taking in the necessary supplies was every whit as difficult as in the case of the Klondike at present ; so that the miners could not afford to touch any ground that yielded less pay than an average of ten dollars per day per head, and only a small part of the region, which is wooded and mountainous, can be said to have been explored. The miners generally came in by way of Stikine River (though the overland pack-trail from Fraser Lake was also used, and a fair number worked their way in *via* Peace River and the Liard), and the proximity of Dease Lake, the focus of these extensive gold-fields, rendered it certain that, as soon as the route to Klondike was established, an attempt would be made to open up a permanent road into Cassiar, in whose possibilities an increasing interest is already being displayed. The country about the head waters of the Liard is said by Hudson's Bay hunters to be one of the best hunting-grounds in the whole North-West, and the rivers are open seven months in the year—two



facts which add much to its present value as a field for prospecting. The white population is estimated at less than two hundred—some of them men who “forked off” on their way to the Yukon—and there are not many Indians there; so that the new-comer will not find himself crowded.

There are two kinds of prospectors everywhere to be met with in the mining camps of the Far West—the one a gambler pure and simple, and the other a man of business, albeit his business is of a somewhat hazardous and speculative nature. The former hopes to make his fortune at a stroke, and cares nothing about the scientific aspect of his work, being content to guide himself by the rough-and-ready maxims—as often as not incorrect—of the old-fashioned placer-miners; the latter, having decided to take up mining as his profession, is a keen student of mining matters, and practical enough to know the value of theoretical considerations. A sufficient knowledge of geological science, the ability to make an assay of the commoner ores, an acquaintance with the methods of engineering applied to gold- and silver-mining—these are items in the modern gold-seeker’s equipment which are well worth the time spent in acquiring them. For, even though the possessor of this mental outfit fails to find a paying claim of his own, he may

reasonably hope to obtain employment in some responsible position about somebody else's mine ; and if he has capital of his own will sooner or later discover a sound investment for it. And supposing he has the good fortune to obtain a good claim in some "away back" locality, which may happen either by discovery or purchase, and is compelled to wait until that locality is opened up before he can realize the value of his investment of time and money, he will be in no worse a position than were the owners of claims (some of them are now millionaires in the American sense) on Trail Creek or in the Slocan ten years ago. *Tout vient à qui sait attendre* is true in mining matters as elsewhere, but the man who waits must be sure he is waiting for something.

To speak of prospecting as a profession for a young fellow with his way to make in the world may seem the height of folly to the stay-at-home critic ; to the critical student of North-Western life and labour there appears nothing absurd in such a point of view. Given a healthy mind in a healthy body, a knowledge of the theory and practice of mining or the determination to get it, and a little capital, the young Englishman who makes such a choice is pretty certain to obtain at least a living, which is more than can be said for the over-crowded

professions of the mother country; and for the benefit of parents and guardians whose ideas of mining life in the West have their source in the tales of Mr. Bret Harte and his disciples, it should be pointed out that the temptations peculiar to a new country are much the same in an agricultural district as in a mining settlement, and that only the *mauvais sujet*, who is still sent West by foolish people, is likely to fall a victim to them in either case.

In conclusion, a little advice to intending investors should prove useful at the present moment. While every proposal to the British public must be judged on its merits, there are certain points often overlooked by the readers of an American or Canadian prospectus.

In the first place, there is a very dangerous tendency towards over-capitalization—a tendency which should be checked by legislation. Thus, in 1896, the total capital asked for by British Columbian mining and transportation companies exceeded \$370,000,000! A parallel tendency among claim-holders to set too high a value on their claims—utterly unproved claims being priced at ten or twenty thousand dollars on the strength of two or three selected scraps of exceptionally rich rock or “specimen quartz,” as working miners ironically

style it—is partly the cause, in part an effect, of this very serious evil. Accordingly, it behoves the intending investor to consider very carefully the nature of the property or properties to be taken over by the new company, and to endeavour to arrive at a true comparison of their real value as compared with the price to be paid to the vendors. And while this advice applies in the case of all new companies, whatever part of the world is to be the scene of operations, it is seven times more pertinent with regard to the various British Columbian schemes now before the public than with regard to Australian or South African flotations of a similar nature; for in nine cases out of ten the properties in question will be found to consist of one or two claims containing gold and silver, but *not* necessarily containing money—the distinction should be obvious!—together with a variety of odds and ends (the properties and goodwill of some storekeeper or individual, or firm engaged in transportation, are familiar items) which may seem to the uninitiated to have a certain value, but are in the eyes of those who know the country (where even a doctor's practice would not fetch a cent) worth nothing, or less than nothing.

In the second place, the student of the prospectus of a new company promoted in the West

is pretty certain to overrate the strength of the directorate. Supposing the list of directors contains the names of members of a provincial legislature or of the Dominion House of Commons, he is apt to regard the fact as some guarantee of the soundness of the concern. He knows that the average English or Scotch M.P. is a business man of substance and repute, and he naturally believes that the Canadian M.P. (or M.P.P.) is not much inferior in this respect, and, like the former, would never allow his name to be used in connection with an unsound undertaking. But Canada, having no large leisured class, and being a country of such magnificent distances that the M.P. cannot attend to his business as well as his legislation, is obliged to pay the workers on her political machinery, with the result that politics have come to be looked upon as a profession (in the States they are looked upon as a *trade*, and it may come to that in Canada!), and the average partisan gets to Ottawa for the sake of his sessional indemnity and what he can make by means of his position.

The tendency, so fatal to the cause of good government in the States, for the successful business man to look upon the game of politics with a species of amused contempt, is becoming more and more noticeable in Canada, and it is much to

be feared that substantial business men will become less and less common in the political circles of the Dominion. Even as things are, the Canadian plutocracy (a rapidly increasing class) seldom meddles with politics, except indirectly, when their vested interests are likely to be affected ; and the fact that a prominent politician (even if he be a Cabinet Minister) is the director of a new company is no argument in favour of its character. " These politicians are the cheapest directors ! " was the remark made to the writer by a good all-round authority of British Columbian affairs ; and the saying may be commended to the attention of those who are directly or indirectly interested in the financial Hooleyism—or rather Hooliganism !—of the West.

Finally, it must not be forgotten that the colonial mining expert (though a more reliable man in most cases than the American " mining sharp ") is often more or less unqualified, and, even when duly qualified, is not always altogether trustworthy ; so that the report of a new company's mining engineer must be considered with reference to his name and qualifications and reputation. Most English mining engineers are honourable men, who would not lend their names to bolster up any shady undertaking ; and if the name of one of

these authorities occurs in a new prospectus, it may be taken as a better guarantee of good faith than the presence of any number of colonial politicians on the board of directors.

For those who are unable to obtain information from a friend on the spot, and are in a position to spare the time and the expense—six weeks and £100 will suffice—a trip to British Columbia may be recommended as a preliminary to any investment of importance. Apart from the information to be gained by a personal inspection of the mine or mines into which the investor thinks of putting his money—and the writer knows of two cases in which thousands of pounds have been saved by such information!—the trip alone is well worth its cost. There is no more beautiful country in the world than the “Sea of Mountains;” and those who have a turn for sport, and do not mind roughing it for a while, can get as much fishing and shooting as they desire, at a ridiculously small cost.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FAR NORTH

IN the Far North (as in the Far West) the first pioneers were servants of the ubiquitous Hudson's Bay Company, who, though they knew that the bars of the Yukon held "colours" of gold, thought the collecting of furs and skins a sufficiently profitable business to engage their whole attention. From the lips of one of these hardy explorers—an old Orkneyman of gigantic frame, who helped to build Fort Selkirk in 1848, and died last year aged seventy-nine—the writer collected most of the following facts concerning the Yukon district fifty years ago.

In 1848—according to this veteran's account—Chief Factor Campbell and his men went up the Liard from Fort Simpson, and built a new fort at the junction of the Pelley and Lewes, supplies being taken in thirty-two foot "York" boats each containing 100 "pieces" (an Hudson's Bay

Company's "piece" for packing or freighting weighed 90 to 100 lbs.). From 1848 to 1853, in which latter year a band of Chilcoot Indians came over the coast mountains and raided the Fort, trading was carried on continuously in that country, where game was amazingly plentiful. Countless herds of caribou roamed over the uplands, occasionally crossing the rivers at fords, and always using the same ford at the same season of the year. At "Caribou Crossing"—a point passed by all going into Klondike *viâ* the coast—herds of five, ten, or fifteen thousand were often seen by the voyageurs. Moose also were so common that the Fort Selkirk people had to refuse to take their skins at any price after a time. Now a good moose-skin is worth 12 to 15 dollars. Innumerable moose used to be seen around the lakes and swamps in summer-time, feeding on the roots and herbs growing in the water. In those days the Indians had a peculiar way of hunting moose. Taking from the dead animal's shoulder a bone which is three inches broad at one end and tapers to a point at the other, they would rattle this behind a tree, taking care to keep concealed, but sometimes exposing the broad end of the bone. The noise and movement of the bone correctly imitated a moose rubbing a tree with its horns,

which is said to be the way these beasts communicate with one another; the noise so made is very crisp and clear, and can be heard a long way in the quiet mountain air undisturbed by the rhythmic sound of the rivers flowing.

Furs were so common that for a flint-lock musket (worth, say, 15s. in England) the Indians were expected to pay a pile of fine furs—such as *silver* fox-skins—standing as high as the weapon placed with the stock on the ground.

In those days there was a story current among the Indian tribes living on the Yukon of a great battle fought with little men from the North (Esquimaux, no doubt!) for the possession of the country—a struggle finally determined by the arrival of a tribe from the South possessing two or three trade-guns, whose reports caused a deadly panic among the invaders.

When in 1853 the Chilcoot Indians—fur-traders themselves, who dealt with Russian and American coasting-vessels—crossed the coast mountains and raided Fort Selkirk, it was decided to abandon the post, and all the people stationed there made their way up to Fort Yukon that same summer. In the following winter they travelled up the Porcupine over the Divide to Fort McPherson—a record winter's walk, assuredly! The hardships

experienced by the miners packing into the Yukon district last winter and spring would have been child's play to these old-fashioned Hudson's Bay Company hunters and voyageurs, whose only outfit for much longer and more arduous expeditions was a gun and ammunition. But these were men wrought, as it were, of chilled iron and tamarac roots; and even among the Klondikers of to-day it would be hard to find their equals in physique. Moreover, they were one and all dead shots, or they would never have survived a winter on the Yukon, which was too out-of-the-way a district to receive the usual supply of pemmican sent each year to most parts of Rupert's Land.

Messrs. Harper and McQuesten, who started to trade along the Yukon in 1874, were the first to recognize the possibility of placer-mining in the Yukon country; and it was principally owing to accounts received from them that in 1882 a party of miners entered by way of the Dyea Pass. All those who got far enough down the river found it easy to make a "grub-stake," and though a "home-stake" (*i.e.* enough to enable a man to go home and settle down) was not so easily found, the Yukon gold-fields soon obtained a fair reputation among the placer-miners of the coast. It was said that anybody who went there could always depend

upon "saving" a thousand dollars' worth of dust or so in a season, and this fact, together with the certainty that sooner or later "coarse gold" would be discovered, led to a gradual increase in the mining population of the country. The discovery of "coarse gold" on Forty Mile Creek led to a small rush to the Yukon, so that at the end of the following year the number of miners working there was something between four and five hundred, and the year's harvest of gold was estimated at 150,000 dollars—an amount not exceeded until the discovery of the Klondike Leads. The story of that great strike—a piece of *chee chacoe*, or tenderfoot's luck, if such a thing ever was!—has been so often told, that there is surely no need to repeat it here.

Life on the Yukon in the eighties was different from what it is to-day, when the North-West mounted police keep order and enforce law, and the placer-miner's camp followers are there to relieve him of his superfluous dust. In the old times (every miner who was on the Yukon before the finding of gold on Forty Mile ranks as an old-timer) Miners' Law prevailed; that is to say, in cases of stealing or murder, not to be confounded with killing in self-defence, or in the rare event of a duel, or causing trouble with the Indians, a meeting of miners was called, before whom the

plaintiff and defendant and the witnesses were examined by the old-timers. The three mentioned above were the only offences of which cognizance was taken, and there were only two set penalties—death, or an order to leave the country forthwith. This simple code was, by all accounts, effectively carried out ; indeed, it was not until the great rush to Klondike began that theft became at all frequent. In judging cases of theft the Yukon miners made a curious distinction between the stealing of a beast of burden (a *self-portable* chattel, as it were) and the stealing of food or dust—property which is merely portable—the former being invariably more severely punished than the latter. In such communities law is always preventive rather than reformative ; hence this distinction, and hence, also, the time-honoured attitude of Judge Lynch towards the horse-stealer, who so often escapes—by means of the stolen horse !

Another point worth noticing with regard to these primitive law courts, is that crimes were more severely punished in the winter than in the summer ; for during the severer season the milder sentence was practically equivalent to the death penalty, only one criminal having ever succeeded in getting to the coast alive across the abysmal snows of the mountains.

Mr. Ogilvie's observation, in his report of 1887, on the practical working of this Miners' Law may be quoted in conclusion. "In the main," he wrote, "the parties to its working meant well ; but often queer views were taken, and it might be said that a man who was personally unpopular fared badly, and that, too, without the parties who decided feeling they had gone the least bit astray. Nothing else could be expected, as this is human nature the world over."

The writer has already had occasion to speak of the peculiar vein of humour discernible in the character of the North-Western placer-miner—a point which may be further illustrated by a reference to some of the "tall tales" of the Yukon pioneers. As Mr. Ogilvie pointed out in the report of his explorations in 1885, these men were, and are, great jokers, and enjoyed nothing so much as taking advantage of a new-comer's ignorance of the country in order to stuff him up with a number of preposterous yarns. A few of these yarns would have made his pamphlet lighter reading than it is, but it is possible those told to him were either too blue or too purple to be set down in the black-and-white of official print. A recent specimen of these stories is actually told of Mr. Ogilvie's medicine-chest, and is worth



reproducing in the form in which it reached the writer. It appears that a party of prospectors at the mouth of the Stewart were anxious to keep a birthday in good style, but there was no whisky to be got—"nary drop!" So they filled a pan with water, boiled it, and put their available store of sugar in it; and then one of them, who had in the mean time visited the explorer's canoe, emptied all the bottles of drugs in his medicine-chest into the bowl. When tasted "'twas none so bad," so concludes the anecdote, "and we was all full when the stuff was done. But, by gosh! next morning most of us had ter'ble bad pains in the bellies. I mysel' could count nine different kinds of ache—*nine being the exact number o' the bottles in Mr. O's med'cine-chest!*"

The Yukon jester's speciality is the "animal story," a product of his wit obviously invented for the benefit of the tenderfoot. Such are the innumerable tales told about the silver-tip (to judge from the narratives of Yukonites, you cannot travel a mile without being attacked by a bear); the story of the moose, who, being lassoed by the captain of a river steamer, would certainly have "yanked the hull outfit up the bank, only the ole man's lasso parted;" the romantic escape of the "big horn," which, having accidentally fallen down

a forty-foot shaft, leapt out on the approach of the claim-owner, "an' was seen no more round them diggins;" and, best of all, perhaps, the story of the "yaller dawg," who was taught by his ingenious owner to hunt gold by scent, and, after making many rich strikes for his owner (who never had occasion to sink another prospect shaft!), was taken home to Tacoma, where he ran down a prominent preacher of total abstinence, who had secretly taken the gold cure the summer before.

Concerning the present stage of development, or rather, arrested development, of the Klondike placers, enough has already been said in the first chapter of this book; and the conditions of life and labour in and around Dawson City are probably familiar by now to every reader of the newspapers. Accordingly, the writer will confine himself to an attempt to answer the following questions: (1) What are the prospects of reef-mining in the Klondike Region? and (2) Is it probable that other important discoveries of "coarse gold" will be made in the Yukon district?

Before attempting to find a reasonable answer to the first question, the geology of the Klondike placers must be carefully considered. At present no detailed study of the whole "mining-camp" (the phrase is here used in its technical sense) has

been made by any mining expert or member of the Canadian Geological Survey, in view of which fact Mr. F. Stanley's remarks in his little pamphlet entitled "A Mile of Gold" (a very American title!) must be taken as being the best we can get. Mr. F. Stanley, an educated man, as well as a miner with twenty years' experience of placer-mining in California, Montana, and elsewhere, is, after all, no mean authority, in spite of the catch-penny title of his book; moreover, his observations are pretty generally corroborated by the claim-holders on other creeks within the Klondike area. According to him, the stones and gravel in these creeks are quite unlike those in other auriferous streams in Yukon and elsewhere on the North American Gold Belt; and the outcrops of the rocks from which this detritus is derived are also unique, for there is a total absence of the slates generally found in connection with gold-bearing rocks along the Sierra Nevada, and, to a less degree, throughout British Columbia. It was the prevalence of limestone, generally a sign of sterility, along the Klondike River, and the lack of flour gold therein, that caused experienced miners to regard that stream as good for nothing, except fishing; and, but for the folly of a tenderfoot (who had no respect for old miners' lore), the millions lying hid

in the affluent creeks and side-gulches might never have been brought to light.

Another notable fact about these repositories of coarse gold is the presence, in their lower strata, of the teeth and bones of extinct animals, mostly mastodons it would appear. This assigns a geological date to the formation of the Klondike placers, *i.e.* they must be pre-glacial.

Now, taking both these points into consideration, the likeness of Klondike to Caribou, where slates are not common, becomes very noticeable ; and one is sorely tempted to prophesy that, as in the case of Caribou, a very rich placer-mining district will prove to be poor in reef-mines. For it is now pretty certain that the rich pre-glacial leads of Caribou were formed by the wearing down of a very great bulk of very low-grade ore—the gold being concentrated by a species of cold weld—in the furious floods of the Middle Tertiary or “Animal Age,” as the Yukon miners call it.

No doubt reef-mining will some day become a prominent industry of the Yukon district, but in the opinion of those qualified to judge, its growth will be as slow and laborious as the growth of reef-mining in Alaska. And the writer believes that, taking into account the remoteness of the northern part of Canada's claim on the Cordillera from the

sea, and the inevitable necessity of obtaining all food supplies from the outside, the employment of Mongolian and Indian labour (as in the coal mines, fisheries, and saw-mills of British Columbia) will be found generally necessary in these undiscovered reef-mines of the future.

An answer to the second question may be found without the exercise of any particular ingenuity. The bars and benches of the Stewart River, a great stream several hundred miles long, are as rich as were those of the Fraser; and nothing is more likely than that the old-timer's adage—"wherever there's a father of rivers\* there's a mother of placers"—will be once more justified by the discovery of coarse gold somewhere in the basin of the Stewart. At present, however, the unexplored part of that river—the long stretch above the Falls—lies too far from the base of supplies, and people are too interested in the Klondike area to trouble about the problem of the Stewart.

In conclusion, it may be said that the opportunities for prospecting in the Yukon district are still almost limitless. The area of that district is 300,000 square miles: of which only the more important river-courses have ever been explored.

\* The Indian name for the Fraser—"Father of Waters."

Of such a country the most accurate map gives a very erroneous idea ; for not only are many of the names, which take up so much space, representative of nothing in particular (thus Fort Selkirk has been for forty years just a scrap of broken wall), but many also of the marks symbolizing river-courses and mountain chains are purely conjectural. At the best a map is a species of fiction, for the lines which stand for rivers, if they were really drawn to scale, would be invisible to the naked eye. If in the ordinary map we take such lines as denoting the ribbons of territory along these rivers which have been trodden by man (Indian hunters, etc.), then the map would be accurately drawn ; so that the ratio of the total area of those lines to the whole expanse of paper fairly represents our real geographical knowledge as compared with our ignorance.

Considering the vastness of this *ultima thule* of the placer-miners, the shortness of the season during which the only trails—*i.e.* the water-courses—can be used, and the extreme ruggedness of the interior, it is evident that many years must elapse before Yukon can be thoroughly explored. And those who think of it as “crowded” at the present moment, never have seen any of the unsettled demesnes of Greater Britain, without which

experience it is impossible to realize how easily Yukon would swallow up, not merely twenty or thirty thousand prospectors, but the mightiest of the migratory armies which flowed westward out of Asia in the Middle Ages.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE FUTURE OF THE NORTH-WEST

"GET population, and all else will be added unto you," was Mr. Chamberlain's word-in-season to the Dominion; and that piece of advice was naturally taken as their text by nine out of ten speakers at the great Immigration Convention held at Winnipeg in the February of 1896. The chief results of that conference (which was attended by more than 300 delegates from all parts of Greater Canada) were the condemnation of the present method of advertising the North-West in Europe and the United States, and the almost unanimous expression of opinion that "the only efficient immigration agent is a contented settler." If the truth of this latter remark be granted—and it is the writer's experience that four out of five new settlers in the North-West came out on the strength of the information received from some prosperous relative or family friend!—the Dominion Government will find the fulfilment of certain

promises made to the North-Western settlers at the last general election a more effectual means of obtaining population than the circulation of libellous panegyrics on the country.

An extension of the North-Western Railway system, and legislation with the object of reserving and redeeming all unoccupied lands "for the settler and not for the speculator," are planks in the Liberal platform upon which every "Grit" candidate in 1896 took his stand. As yet, however, with the exception of a somewhat poorly equipped expedition to the Hudson Bay, the results of which are not yet to hand, nothing has been done towards fulfilling the former promise; and to judge from their conduct with regard to the proposed Stikine-Teslin Railway, it seems certain the present Government are in no hurry to discontinue the old short-sighted policy of reserving large blocks of land—whether the land is agricultural or mineral, the principle is precisely the same—in newly opened districts.\*

It was hoped that the expedition to the Hudson Bay would finally settle the vexed question as to the navigability of the Straits during the summer and autumn months. Unfortunately, owing to the

\* The Stikine-Teslin Railway Bill was thrown out by the Dominion Senate; so that, after all, the promoters did not receive 4,000,000 acres of auriferous land for building 150 miles of line.

smallness of the grant (\$30,000), it was impossible to obtain a modern steamship of fair speed and specially built for working through ice, without which the experiment could add little or nothing to our knowledge on this point. While it is certain that the Bay itself is always open, the presence of heavy drift-ice in the Strait renders the navigation dangerous, if not impossible, for the greater part of the year; and, although since Hudson's discoveries in 1609 and 1610 more than 730 voyages into and out of the Bay have been made, generally by small sailing-vessels, between the beginning of June and the middle of October, the exact period during which the route is practicable for steamships of a better class than the average "ocean tramp," remains to be determined. In the opinion of many, if the Straits could be proved navigable for five months in the year, the Hudson's Bay Railway from Winnipeg to the mouth of the Churchill River *viâ* Grand Rapids on the Saskatchewan (forty miles of this railway already actually exists), would pay its way. The advantages attending a modern use of the historic route of the Hudson's Bay Company, the possession of which, as we have seen, determined the issue of the struggle between that ancient corporation and the other great fur-trading companies, would be many and important.

In the first place, the North-West would be brought more than fifteen hundred miles nearer the mother country, so that freight-rates between, say, Liverpool and Winnipeg, would be about half what they are at present; and a corresponding reduction in the cost of passage for emigrants would certainly lead to a great increase of the particular import most required in the North-West of to-day, *i.e.* the British agricultural labourer, who cannot, as a rule, save enough out of his wages to pay the expense even of a journey by steerage and colonist's car. Secondly, a cool and healthy outlet for cattle and perishable farm produce would be provided during the hot Canadian summer. Thirdly, an enormous area of good agricultural land, at present inaccessible, would be rendered available for immediate settlement. And, last but not least, a shorter and safer way to the Pacific Coast for purposes of Imperial defence or offence would be established. In weighing this last-mentioned advantage, we must not forget (certainly Canadians did not overlook these facts during the Venezuelan crisis) that one shore of the St. Lawrence estuary belongs to a foreign power, and that it would be easy for that power to cut the railway communication between Montreal and Halifax.

The Saskatchewan and Churchill Rivers—albeit

there are natural impediments to their continuous navigation—would form a valuable adjunct to the new route until another railway through the valley of the latter river, from Grand Rapids to Prince Albert and Edmonton, could be profitably built. Such a system of railways would open up about as much land suitable for mixed farming as was opened up by the Canadian Pacific Railway, and that at less than a fifth of the cost; for recent scientific investigations have proved that over a very large area of land north of the Saskatchewan Valley, precisely the same climatic conditions prevail as in Saskatchewan or Northern Alberta. Both Sir Wilfred Laurier and Sir Charles Tupper are in favour of building a Hudson's Bay Railway without delay; but the followers of either leader apparently regard the work as out of the pale of practical politics—at any rate for the present. For years, however, even his own personal friends scoffed at Sir John Macdonald's scheme of a trans-continental railway, but in the end the most cautious became convinced of its feasibility; and it may be that time—especially if the present prosperity continues—will convince the most frugal-minded Liberals of the feasibility of basing a railway system on the Hudson Bay and its affluent rivers. The great objection to this railway's success is the present

organization of the Manitoban grain-trade, whereby wheat can be held in the elevators for a rise in price ; and even the sudden jerk upwards of one or two cents (due, perhaps, to a far-off rumour of war, or of bad weather on the other side of the globe) may be taken advantage of by the holder. Of course, if wheat was stored for seven or eight months on the shores of the Bay it could not be profitably moved back.

Many other schemes for the construction of new railways are now "in the air," and one, at least, of these is certain to be partially realized at no distant date. The great progress made since 1894 by reef-mining in the Kootenay district (which, judged by the results of placer-mining in the past, and the investigations of the Canadian Geological Survey, is not more fertile than any one of four or five other districts north of the Canadian Pacific Railway) would almost appear to justify the immediate construction of a railroad along the well-defined valley which lies between the "Gold Range" and the Rockies—the second and first waves of geological disturbance in the "Sea of Mountains"—and forms the natural highway between the northern and southern portions of the province. Until these distant mining camps (of which Caribou alone has communication, even

by road, with the south) are opened up by a railway, nothing more can be done there ; for the high prices of labour and supplies, and the prohibitive cost of importing machinery or exporting ore, prevent the development of many discoveries of auriferous quartz and silver ores ; and, for the same reason, the hydraulic mining of alluvial deposits, too poor to be touched by the old-time placer-miners, who could never afford to work anything yielding less than ten dollars a day for each pair of hands, is, except in the case of Caribou, out of the question. And when the time comes, if it has not already arrived, to open up these half-forgotten fields, it is to be hoped that the work will be done by Canadian and British capital, and not, as in the case of the Kootenay, by United States capitalists. It is estimated that nearly eighty per cent. of the capital invested in the Kootenay has its home, so to speak, in the Western States—a partial “Americanizing” of a Canadian estate, which does not reflect credit on the capitalists of Eastern Canada and Great Britain, and must not occur again.

Until both the “Fertile Belt” of Manitoba and the North-West territories, and the “Gold and Silver Belt” of British Columbia and the Yukon district, have been completely opened up by means of railways, the development of Greater Canada



cannot be regarded as final. Fifty years have sufficed for the complete opening up of the Western and Pacific States, some of which have already passed their prime ; and it may be that 1929—half a century having elapsed since Lord Dufferin drove the first spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway at Pembina, and Canada emerged from her forests—will see the realization of Sir John Macdonald's ruling ideal. For even if Winnipeg has not by then attained the size and importance of the Chicago of to-day, and Canada's chief port on the Pacific be still somewhat inferior in wealth and greatness to the present San Francisco, yet it is tolerably certain that Greater Canada will be as populous and prosperous as Canada itself, and that the centre of gravity of British North America will lie, not, as at present, somewhere between Toronto and Montreal, but in Manitoba—midway between the two oceans. "Thirty years from now," prophesies a Mazzini of the New World, who has dared to look further into the twentieth century than any of the old-world political seers, "the Dominion will have a population of twenty millions, and in the production of wheat and precious metals will equal and, perhaps, surpass the American West of to-day." And no student of North-Western statistics will cherish a lesser hope, for, if only the

present rate of growth be maintained for that period, all these things will come to pass.

Most people who have not visited the North-West firmly believe that a long winter of Arctic rigour prevents all outdoor work during a great portion of the North-Western year, and forms an insurmountable obstacle to any such growth in the future. This fallacy is a chief cause—perhaps *the* chief cause—of the preference shown by European emigrants for the States as a field for settlement ; and it is still worked for all it is worth by Yankee immigration agents, whose tales of the Canadian climate have caused many new arrivals in Boston or New York to change their plans—and their nationality—at the eleventh hour. “Nine months’ winter and three months late in the fall ;” even so the writer has heard the North-Western year defined by one of these gentry, who are in the habit of describing the Dominion as “that little ice-house up there.” Here is one of their tallest tales of the North-Western winter—a sufficiently quaint specimen of American humour. It takes the form of a dialogue between two Yankee agents, who skipped aboard the cars outside Montreal, and began talking to a batch of immigrants.

Agent No. 1 : “D’ye mind the cold time we had in Saskatchewan ?”

Agent No. 2: "I guess I do! Didn't all our stock get froze to death by the summer frosts?"

Agent No. 1: "Not all, surely! There was that little red cow that we tried to keep alive in the cellar through the winter. If you remember, she got out somehow, and was froze solid outside, and 'twasn't till July next that we thawed her out."

Agent No. 2: "*Thawed her out? No, sir. Why, didn't we milk ice-cream from her all that summer!*"

By means of such jests, and the offer of free drinks and free passes to the South, many used to be persuaded; and the agents, who received so much per head for their converts, drove, and still drive, a fair business.

The length and severity of the winter is different in different parts of the North-West, so that it is hardly correct to speak of "the" North-Western winter at all. In the southern part of British Columbia the winter seldom lasts much longer than three months, and the thermometer hardly ever falls below  $-20^{\circ}$  F. On the other flank of the Rockies, in the ranching country of South Alberta, the season lasts a fortnight longer, and the thermometer occasionally registers as low as  $-30^{\circ}$  F.; but there, as in British Columbia, frequent "chinooks," or warm western winds, are the cause of mild spring-like spells of weather. In Manitoba there

are four months of frost rarely broken by a thaw, and the spirit in the glass sometimes records a temperature of  $-40^{\circ}$  F., especially in February, which is the coldest month. In Saskatchewan and Northern Alberta things are much the same as in Manitoba, except that the coldest "snap" generally comes in January, and temperatures as low as  $-60^{\circ}$  F. are experienced now and again. And it is not until the traveller arrives at Dawson City, or Fort MacPherson, that a really Arctic winter is met with, when for two or three months the average daily temperature is well below zero, and there is an occasional fall to  $-70^{\circ}$  F., or a few degrees further down.

Now, it is a notable fact that in the North-West a temperature of  $-40^{\circ}$  F. (which does not occur half a dozen times in the course of the hardest winter on the northernmost limit of the Fertile Belt) does not affect humanity nearly so much as  $-10^{\circ}$  F. in the Eastern Provinces, or  $+12^{\circ}$  F. (twenty degrees of frost) in the mother-country. This is due to the peculiar dryness of the winter air, and the absence at such temperatures of all wind. Then, again, the snow is absolutely dry, so that it is impossible to make a snowball, and the worker out-of-doors is able to wear loose moccasins and fingerless mitts of soft leather (moose-skin or

deer-hide), which keep out the cold and do not impede the circulation of the blood in the extremities. Add to these a coat and cap of skin or fur, and good woollen underclothing (the English-made is best), and the tenderfoot need not think about his toes, even though the mercury freezes. If, however, a blizzard is blowing, or the thermometer falls to  $-60^{\circ}$  F. or so, he will be well advised to take a look at his nose now and again, for the prickly sensation in that organ, which is prelude to a frost-bite there, is easily overlooked.

In five years' experience of the North-West climate, the writer remembers only one occasion when the temperature fell to the last-mentioned extreme. At such times the vapour-laden breath from the lungs freezes the moment it leaves the lips, and mingles with the air, and, falling in the form of infinitesimal snow-dust, produces a soft whispering sound—a ghostly *susurrus*, once heard never forgotten. Since the temperature of the breath may be taken as about blood-heat ( $90^{\circ}$  or  $60^{\circ}$  *above* freezing-point, in round numbers), it would seem that if the air was at a temperature of  $30^{\circ}$  F. ( $60^{\circ}$  *below* freezing-point) the vapour exhaled might be expected to become reduced to freezing-point, and to freeze the moment it was commingled with that air, and it is not at first sight evident why a

much lower temperature is required to produce the phenomenon in question. The explanation of this mystery will, however, be at once found by those who are acquainted with the nature of "latent heat," or by those who will be at the pains to look up the matter in some text-book of natural philosophy.

A more serious impediment to the success of farming in the unsettled parts of the North-West is the occasional occurrence of summer frosts, which sometimes damage the wheat-crop to a considerable extent. Forty years ago the Ontario farmer used to suffer from this plague of uncleared countries; but the gradual disappearance of the forest and bush before the settler's axe—the Canadian, by the way, is said to be "born with an axe in his hand by the side of a tree-stump"—has led to a decrease in the amount of surface-water, and a consequent cure of the evil. A similar change is already taking place in Saskatchewan and Northern Alberta; for the amount of frosted wheat sent to the local mills is said to be very much less in proportion to the total crop than it was five years ago. The farmer who is able to feed damaged grain to cattle (a step which is also taken when the price of grain is very low) will not suffer so much as his neighbour without stock in the case of such a visitation; moreover, it is generally possible to choose

land for homesteading, where the summer frosts are practically harmless. The settler should always choose land with a slope towards the north, and open in that direction; for during the summer nights there is generally a breeze from that direction, and on such land the dank white mists born of subterranean waters cannot brood long enough to do damage—in the event of a fall of temperature.



## CHAPTER X

### THE ROMANCE OF THE FUR TRADE

FOR centuries after the planting of the earliest European settlements in North America, the fur trade was considered by far the most important industry of the settlers, and the great profits derived therefrom were the main incentives to further exploration. It was in the prosecution of the trade in peltries that men first entered the vast prairies beyond the Great Lakes, ascended the two Saskatchewanes and the Mississippi and Missouri, and, scaling the long rampart of the Rockies, descended into the undreamed-of territories of Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. The annals of these explorations are for the most part unwritten (except, indeed, in the geography books, whose maps and lists of place-names are the only monuments to hundreds of makers of history as well as geography), and little more can be done by the professed historian than the tracing of the

various steps by which the dead-and-gone fur traders attained their first sight of the Pacific—the least known and most romantic of the Seven Seas before the nineteenth century began, and plainly destined to be the world's battlefield in the twentieth. But here and there in his researches the historian finds not merely history but a story, and has not a few stray glimpses of the spacious times of these fur-trading pioneers.

Even during the French occupation of Canada hunting and trapping in the vicinity of the settlements soon ceased to be profitable; so that the fur-trader, and those from whom he obtained his furs, found it necessary to travel further and further afield. In the partially settled tracts of the North-West of to-day it is noticed that even a small amount of traffic to and fro (to say nothing of actual settlement) will cause a strikingly rapid diminution in the amount of game there. Experienced hunters and trappers will tell you that a mere haying-trail or saddle-path, or even a cattle-track (for next to the scent of man wild beasts most loathe and dread the scent of domestic animals), will exclude moose and bear from a district as effectually as would a barbed-wire fence; and even in the case of geese, duck, and other wildfowl, the progress of settlement is invariably

injurious to the hunter's chance of success. Accordingly, as early as the seventeenth century the *coureurs des bois*—men who travelled for months together into the unsettled wastes, trapping and hunting themselves, and also exchanging goods (both wet and dry) for the furs taken by Indians—were already a prominent class in Canadian society. At the beginning of the eighteenth century some of the recognized trade-routes—routes whose milestones were the nameless graves of such as had perished by misadventure or at the hands of hostile Indians—used by these folk already touched on the confines of the Great Plains; and it was a report brought in by one of these *coureurs des bois* of the astounding richness in game of the lands beyond the Great Lakes, and of the genial character of the Indians dwelling therein, which led Verandrye, son of the Sieur de Varennes, to take his memorable journey “beyond the sunset.” Verandrye's work of exploration was carried a step further by Le Gardeur St. Pierre, who was sent by order of the Governor of New France (as Canada was then called) to “search for the Western Sea.” He found that sea—but it was a sea of grass, the pasturage of a million buffalo!—and it is in his report of the expedition that we first hear of the Hudson's Bay Company's

operations from a French source. "The English," he writes, "annoyed at not receiving a large amount of furs at the Bay, sent collars to the Indians, forbidding them under penalty of dying to carry the furs elsewhere than to them. Not having done so, and about eight hundred of them having died from cold, the rest were all seized with fright, and told one another that the Manitou had wreaked vengeance on them in answer to the prayer of the English."

It will be seen from St. Pierre's orders that one of the incentives to exploration was the desire to discover the "Western Sea." Here is yet another instance of that quest for the Western or North-West passage (*i.e.* a short route westward or north-westward to the wealth of the East Indies) which inspired so many great explorers from the days of Christopher Columbus to those of Sir John Franklin. And yet another instance of the same aspiration is to be found in the preamble of the famous charter granted by Charles II. to Prince Rupert and his fellow-adventurers—that charter which was the legal life and being of the Hudson's Bay Company. The motive assigned for the royal gift was "that the corporators have at their own great cost and charges undertaken an expedition for Hudson's Bay for the discovery of a new

passage into the South Sea, and for finding some trade for furs, minerals, and other considerable commodities, and by such their undertaking have already made such discoveries as do encourage them to proceed further in pursuance of their said design, by means whereof there may probably arise very great advantage to us and our kingdom."

Never was a better bargain driven; for to the Hudson's Bay Company and their servants, who ruled the Indians with such tact and patience for so many decades, the Empire owes the possession of Greater Canada.

That the French-Canadian (or, at any rate, his half-brother the French-Canadian half-breed) entered the high prairies before his English-speaking rival in business, could be proved (if the fact were not otherwise demonstrable) from a consideration of the older North-Western place-names, most of which are French versions of the still more ancient Indian appellations. Perhaps the best case in point is that of Qu'Appelle (Anglicé, "Who calls?"—there are both a river and a town of that name in the North-West Territories), which is quite meaningless to those who do not know the story. A certain Cree Indian was returning from the sale of his furs to one of the *coureurs des bois*. His

take had included a number of fine silver fox-skins, so that he returned rich beyond expectation, and had made up his mind to marry his betrothed before joining his own band. Accordingly, instead of taking the direct homeward trail, he turned his canoe down through the "beautiful wooded vales of the Qu'Appelle," travelling the shining reaches of that fair stream till the sun set and the crescent moon grew bright. Even then he plied his paddle instead of resting, for he had determined within his soul to see the face of his maiden at sunrise. But at moonset he stopped opposite a little poplar-bluff, and even as he turned in-shore, plunging his paddle in deep on the left so as to turn, he heard his name uttered as if out of the depths of the bluff. "Qu'Appelle? Who calls?" he cried; and a long silence followed. Then, just as he made ready to paddle on—for he had no heart to rest in that haunted shade—he heard his name uttered again, and this time he recognized the voice as that of his betrothed. Again he cried, "Who calls?" but no answer came, and after waiting for a while he continued his journey. All that night he travelled on, and at early sunrise came within sight and hearing of the lodges of his friends. They were singing the death-songs over his dead maiden. And, inquiring the time and

circumstances of her death, he was told that she died as the moon set, and that before dying she uttered his name twice.

The Canadian records—as yet, the keeper of the archives at Ottawa has not more than half completed the herculean task of putting in order, and rendering accessible to the student, the tons of documentary evidence bearing on the history of Canada—teem with facts relating to the fur-traders' dealings with the Indians; but it is seldom, indeed, that such an *immortelle* of romance is found in those dusty piles of dry-as-dust details. Through all these bald chronicles of obscure struggles with the French and the Indians—particularly the Iroquois—who fought on their side, one sordid fact is everlastingly evident: that the real motive of the fighting was a desire for the lion's share of the profit from the fur trade. And in the end the lion got his share! Indeed, there were times when the gathering of scalp-locks was to all intents and purposes a branch—and that not the least lucrative—of the commerce in peltries. Not only did the French and British pay a price for Indian scalps (competition causing the prices to be high), but in 1764 the grandson of William Penn (who had declared the person of an Indian to be sacred) offered \$150 for the scalp of an Indian man, \$100



for that of a boy under ten, and \$50 for that of a woman or girl.

Even when the struggle between French and British for the possession of Canada was finally settled at the Heights of Abraham, and the *aw-oh-aw-oh-aw-oh* (the last syllable an octave higher than the rest, and prolonged till the chest was empty of air) of the Iroquois war-whoop or scalp-cry ceased to be heard in the East, men still fought over parcels of furs. The competition between the Yankee free-traders and the Canadian merchants was carried on not without bloodshed; and then there was the great war between the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies, which began in 1815 and ended in 1821, when the two corporations were finally united. The worst outrage perpetrated in this civil war was the murder of Governor Semple of Fort Douglas on the Red River, and a score of his subordinates, by a gang of Indians and half-breeds in the pay of the North-West Company. Fort Douglas was armed with artillery, and commanded the only water-way out of the North-West; and the Nor'-Westers' army was journeying past to escort their company's boat-loads of fur down the river, when they were met by Semple and his men, whom they massacred, in spite of their leader's efforts to

restrain them. The scene and action of many stories have been laid in the North-West at that period of anarchy, of which more or less historical romances Mr. Gilbert Parker's "Chief Factor" is the most masterly, seeing that it is no mere photograph of bygone scenery and customs, but a picture—such a picture as Millet, working in another medium, has often given to the world—in which there is action, character, atmosphere, and, most definite but least definable of all literary qualities, the unworldliness and aloofness of true romance.

There are still living hunters and trappers and others who remember the palmy days of the Hudson's Bay Company, when they ruled the country from the Bay to the Pacific, and from the Arctic Circle down to the international boundary-line. Many such are to be met with in the "away back" parts of Saskatchewan and Athabasca, and with some of these the writer has hunted, and, after a square meal of wildfowl and a "horn" or two of rye-whisky, talked with them, or rather listened to their talk. And much as he prizes his experiences of sport in those little-known territories, he prizes even more the occasional glimpses which the rambling discourses of these men have afforded him of the spacious life of the North-West that was.

The summer "Running of the Buffalo" by the hunters of the Red River Settlement was perhaps the most notable event of the year during the period of "The Company's" utmost prosperity (*i.e.* from 1821 to 1860), and some description of that gigantic hunting-party will give the reader a fair idea of the romantic side of the fur-trader's life. As early as 1820 the number of ox-carts assembled for the "Summer Hunt" exceeded five hundred, and in the fifties there were years when as many as fifteen hundred carts and waggons and more than two thousand men, women, and children came to the time-honoured trysting-place on the high prairies about two days' journey from Fort Garry. A hunter's wage consisted in those days of Hudson's Bay "blankets" or notes to the value of £3 sterling; the women, whose duty it was to skin and cut up the carcasses of the buffalo and make them into the famous pemmican, received £2 5*s.* apiece; and each of the boys and girls who assisted obtained the sum of £1 as a *quid pro quo*. Seeing that the hunt generally lasted a full three months, nobody can say these folk were too well paid for their work, especially when it is remembered that buffalo-running was an arduous and risky pursuit, and that now and again the parties were molested by Blackfeet and other "wicked" Indians.

Many of the hunters of the plains were also farmers in a small way, so that a start was not possible until after seeding. For the same reason it was necessary to return before harvest-time. But as soon as the spring rains were fallen, and their long "river-lots" newly clad in a silken wind-blown vesture of green, they would hitch up their oxen or "shaganappies," *i.e.* native ponies, and trundle off in their springless Red River carts to the rendezvous. There they would camp until all the hunters on the roll had arrived, spending their time casting bullets, cleaning their guns, mending their carts, and talking over the weather.

The last evening at home was a time of revelry, and many of the Red River settlers who did not intend to make the hunt, would come down to the camp to help on the fun. After sundown great watch-fires would be kindled within the circle of carts, and the older hunters would sit round about on their heels in the wavering firelight, exchanging tales of adventures in every nook and corner of the West, while the younger chatted with the women and girls who sat in or under the carts. Then, in some sudden expectant hush—that strange, inevitable silence which sooner or later falls upon the noisiest of such gatherings—somebody would begin the beautiful old ditty of "À la Claire

Fontaine." Long before the end of the first verse all the men would be singing or beating time, and when it came to the refrain—

"Il y a longtemps que je t'aime,  
Jamais je ne t'oublierai,"

the women's voices would soar above the men's in a sudden gush of sound, fresh and clear as the fountain of the song. Then perhaps "Lochaber no more" would be sung by the many Scotchmen and Scotch half-breeds in the gathering, and after that saddest and most haunting of all melodies, a fiddle would be pulled out of its moose-skin bag, and the stirring strains of the "Red River Jig" would bring everybody to their feet. Next to a plaintive ditty the hunters of the plains loved a rollicking dance; and, having once begun, they would not stop till the sun was under their feet and the bonfires nothing but heaps of grey crumbling ashes.

On these occasions particular attention was paid to the moon. If her appearance was such that "a man could hang up his kettle on her horn," everybody believed there would be a month of fine weather. If not—why, they would hope for the best.

At sunrise next morning the roll would be called over, and immediately afterwards, at a meeting of

the chief hunters, a leader and his staff, captains, guides, and a crier were appointed. The leader had authority over the whole party, and at the beginning and end of each day's march issued general orders through the members of his staff, who also acted as police; the captains with their men took turns at patrolling the camp and mounting guard; the guides conducted the hunters from one good camping-place to another; and the crier, who called the hunters together whenever the "law of the hunt" had been violated, not only proclaimed the sentence of the court, but also executed it. It was the duty of the officers, one and all, to see that the camp was properly set out at night. The carts were drawn up in a close circle, and within this the tents were pitched in double and treble rows, the women and children sleeping in the innermost. If danger was apprehended, the oxen and horses were tethered inside the corral and the men lay with their guns loaded; otherwise the cattle were allowed to graze on the open prairie.

Long before the buffalo were sighted, they could be *heard* by the experienced hunter. Though at the time barely in his teens, one of the writer's informants vividly recollected how he entered the summer pasturage of the buffalo for the first time

in his life. One windy morning, three weeks after they had left the Red River, his father asked him if he could hear the bulls; and when he said he could hear nothing but the wind, all the men laughed at him, and his father was not very well pleased. By-and-by they came to a badger's hole, and his father pulled him off the cart and told him to put his ear into it, and when he did so he distinctly heard a deep, far-off rumbling sound. That happened early in the morning, but it was not until noon that a man standing up in his stirrups could discern what seemed to be a long streak of dun-coloured cloud resting on the high western rim of the horizon. At sunset this cloud resolved itself into two vast herds of buffalo, all moving at the same slow pace and grazing as they went. Everybody wanted to be at them, but the authorities would not hear of it; for a night alarm would sometimes cause the herds to stampede for fifty miles or more. But at ten o'clock next morning the hunters were made to fall into line, and the crier was ordered to cry the "ho!" which was the signal for a general attack.

The quaint expression, "Here's a ho!" which old-fashioned North-Western folk utter before gulping down the dram or "horn" of whisky, is really a reminiscence of this ancient signal to begin



the fun, and not, as some authorities say, a silly reference to the opening phrase of Isaiah lv.

The hunters used to enter on the chase with their mouths full of bullets, loading and firing from horseback, and leaving the ownership of the slain to be settled afterwards. When loading, they poured the powder from the palm of the hand, and dropped a bullet from the mouth into the muzzle of the gun, and they sometimes fired without putting it up to the shoulder, and in such haste that the bullet had not always time to fall down the barrel. These guns cost fifteen to twenty shillings each, and were not exactly masterpieces of the gunmaker's art, so that explosions were common enough, and the sight of a hunter who lacked a thumb or a few fingers as a consequence of his hurry was not infrequent.

And so, day by day, week after week, until it was time to turn back, or the buffalo had fled beyond reach, this disciplined army of hunters harried the rear of the herds, slaying hundreds between sunrise and sunset, and going back on their trail at nightfall to set the camp. The work of skinning and breaking up the slaughtered animals, and making the choice parts into the famous pemmican, or spreading them to be dried in the sun, fell upon the women and children

whose labours were often prolonged far into the night.

The Hudson's Bay Company, it should be noticed, always did their best to prevent the indiscriminate slaughter of the wild animals, upon whose welfare their own ultimately depended, and the buffalo-runners in their employ seldom killed the calves or hunted in the breeding season ; so that the practical extinction of the North American bison cannot be attributed to the company's policy of supplying their many northern posts with pemmican, the most nutritious and most portable of all prepared foods. The Yankee "free-traders," who in 1870 had nearly a score of factories in the Bow and Belly Rivers district, and employed a thousand Indians to hunt for them, are principally to be blamed for this result. The finer furs, which come chiefly from the Far North, were out of the reach of these traders, and in order to make good profits they encouraged the Indians to hunt at all seasons, the skin of the buffalo calf, which fetched a good price in the East, being the favourite purchase. They generally paid the Indians in liquor—the vilest of "red-eye"—but, if possible, they paid them only with blows ; so that their presence was a menace to the country's welfare, and one of the first pieces of work done

by the newly established North-West Mounted Police was to break up their establishments, which had become cities of refuge for all the worst villains in Montana and the Western States.

The fur trade was never so important in the Western and Pacific States as it was in the Canadian States. One reason for this was the lack of the finer furs, which are not found so far south as a rule ; and then again, after the discovery of gold in California in 1849, the quest for a gold or silver mine was the Western pioneer's only notion of a hunt. Still, many of the Wisconsin old-timers were fur-traders, and much of the romance of their life was personified in Pierre Le Count, a French Canadian by birth, who lately died at Green Bay, Wisconsin, at the age of ninety-seven. This old man was probably the last of the red-shirted, buckskin-breeched French-Canadian voyageurs and trappers ; but seventy-odd years spent below the Line had made of him a fairly complete Yankee. One of his many friends—for during the last ten years of his life he was regarded as a sort of State monument, and as such frequently visited by those interested in the antiquities of Wisconsin—took notes of his conversation ; the substance of which notes, in so far as they concern the present subject, is here set down.

As happens with so many of the Western pioneers, his was a green old age. It was not till the very last that he lost his health and good spirits; neither was his memory (in which, as in a mirror, seventy years of life by field and flood were reflected) dimmed by the course of time.

For some years Le Count worked for the Canadian companies, but finding that he could get a better price in the States, and that there were no restrictions on the fur trade there, he decided to transfer the scene of his operations to the territory now called Wisconsin. Fort Dearborn, where Chicago stands to-day, was then the centre of the American fur trade. At the time when Le Count began to hunt and trap for his livelihood, John Jacob Astor (the second of the name) was beginning his abortive attempt to corner the fur trade, not only of the States, but also of Canada. In the first part of his task he succeeded, but in the second he failed signally; and the only memento of his scheming is the name "Astoria" of a small town in one of the Pacific States.

Asked his most curious experience, this old man was inclined to put his visit to New York "to see Jake Astor" in the pride of place as the most thrilling event of his career. It appears that Astor's agent at Fort Dearborn was for ever

attempting to cut prices down, and in so doing he made criticisms on Le Count's furs which hurt the old man—he was young enough then—in his weak point. That is to say, his pride as a first-rate hunter was touched. According to Astor's agent, his beaver was too early (*i.e.* caught too soon in the autumn to have the finest natural gloss); his otter-skin was taken from a drowned animal, and had lain in the water too long; his minks were all "kits," and too small to be worth the full market price. One year—1828 or 1829, which he could not remember—happening to have money saved from the previous season's work, he made up his mind to visit Astor at New York, and sell to him directly. Even if he got no more than the agent offered (so the simple-minded trapper argued) he would see not only a really great city, but also a really great man. To the Western fur-traders of that day, John Jacob Astor the Second shared with Sir George Simpson the fame of being the greatest man in the world. Accordingly, he travelled to Buffalo by boat, thence to Albany by four-horse stage, and from Albany by boat down the Hudson, taking with him his bundle of furs. Arrived at New York, he found he did not know where Astor lived; but after many fruitless inquiries a "real nice man" took

him to Astor's abode, which, to Le Count's vast surprise, was not a trading-place, but a big, smart-looking house.

What happened next is best told in the old man's own words, translated to some extent. "Not meaning to wilt after coming all that way to see Jake, I climbed the steps and pulled the knocker. A man came to the door, and I told him who I was and what I wanted, and he said Mr. Astor was not at home. I said I was willing to wait till he came home, and the man shut the door. So I sat down on the door-step, and waited till near on sunset—one, two, three hours. Then I pulled the knocker again, and the same man opened the door, and seemed kind of surprised to see me there still. I asked him again if Astor was at home, and he laughed like a crazy creature, and said he didn't think Mr. Astor would ever come home for me. I stuck it out for another hour after he shut the door, and then the town-watch came along, and I told him what I was waiting for. Then he explained some things which set me agin Astor for evermore, and I just packed up my furs and started back for Fort Dearborn and sold my furs there—but not to Astor's man. Never dealt with Jake Astor again."

Next to this incident, the most striking thing

which befell the old trapper was a discovery he made in 1834. That year he was trapping along the head-waters of the Mississippi (near Lake Itaska, as it is now called), and on the bank of a little creek he found something that puzzled him. On the little knoll where the underbrush had been cleared away years before was a soft maple tree. In one side of the trunk of this tree was sticking the blade of a very long slender knife. The blade had been driven clean through a man's head, and the skull was still pinned fast to the tree. There were a lot of bones on the ground that had been his body. Who killed that man, and why, there was no guessing. It was not done by an Indian, for the knife was a fine one—silver handle like a cross, and carved—and no Indian would have left his knife in a tree. It was driven in by some white man, and he hated the man he had killed so badly that he wanted him to stay there where he was fastened. And the man stayed there until the wolves "or other varmints" had picked his meat off and the bones fell apart. But there the skull stuck, and rattled when the wind began to blow, being a trifle loose-set after all those years.

Le Count sent the knife to the State of Wisconsin Historical Society, in hopes some of the



members would be able to dig up its history. But they never solved the puzzle for him.

When old age compelled him to give up active life, Le Count had a cabin erected on the road leading west from Suamico, about seventeen miles north of Green Bay. It stands in a dense grove of pines and hardwood timber, screened from the northerly gales by the pine-forest, while to the south the spires of the little city that was his birthplace (it was called La Baye then) show beyond the shining waters. In this cabin he died as he had lived—alone. One afternoon a neighbour living a mile or so away went to the hut to see if the old man needed anything. The trapper was sitting in his big chair, his long-barrelled muzzle-loader across his knees, and his dog at his feet. Both were silent and motionless; but while the dog was asleep, his master was dead. Even so peacefully, and dreaming, it may be, of some hunting exploit far away in space and time, died one of the last—the last of all perhaps—of the French-Canadian voyageurs.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BARREN GROUNDS

THE boundary-line between the "Barren Grounds" (or "the Barrens," as they are generally called by the fur-traders) and the forest region of Canada is by no means so distinct and regular as the boundary-line between the *tundri* or treeless wastes and the forests of Siberia. The Canadian Barrens attain their most southerly limit (lat.  $57^{\circ}$ ) in Labrador—a fact which is sufficiently explained by the position of that peninsula, bounded on three sides by ice-ridden seas, and perpetually washed by cold currents out of the high Arctic seas. On the opposite coasts of the Hudson's Bay they begin at about  $60^{\circ}$  of latitude; and thence the vanishing point of the forests follows a line curving upwards to the mouth of the Mackenzie, where trees are found as high as  $68^{\circ}$ , or even higher, along the low, marshy banks of that river. From the Mackenzie the line curves slightly southward till it reaches Behring's Sea in  $65^{\circ}$ . If we

include the area of the Arctic islands, which form so large a part of the Dominion (especially on the new Canadian two-cent stamp), the area of these cheerless wastes exceeds a million and a half square miles.

In point of fact the boundary-line between the forest region and the Barrens of Canada is as non-existent as any other line drawn by physical geographers, for the one merges into the other almost imperceptibly ; and just as portions of the first are treeless, *e.g.* much of the south shore of the Hudson's Bay, so occasional areas of the latter, *e.g.* river valleys, the margins of lakes, and sheltered spots generally, are wooded to some extent. The influence of the local winds is a most important factor in the matter. Thus the northerly winds which prevail throughout the summer months in Baffin's Bay and Davis's Straits, and fill the north-eastern part of the American Archipelago with rank Arctic ice, are the cause of the very low temperatures there and the lack of timber ; while, on the other hand, the southerly summer winds of the Mackenzie valley help to extend the forest of that favoured region nearly as far as the very shores of the Arctic Ocean. Athabasca and Saskatchewan owe their possession of fine timber-limits to the prevalence of the warm western wind or

“chinook,” which blows out of the Pacific across the mountains ; whereas Keewatin—the land “at the back of the north wind”—has little good timber, because the chinook never reaches there, and throughout the settled North-West the difference between the timber on the south or western and the northern or eastern slopes of rising ground is always very marked.

Long before the treeless wastes are reached the forests cease to be forests except by courtesy. The trees—black and white spruce, the Canadian larch, and the grey pine, willow, alder, etc.—have an appearance of youth ; so that the traveller would hardly suppose them to be more than a few years old at first sight. Really this juvenile appearance is a species of second childhood ; for on the shores of the Great Bear Lake four centuries are necessary for the growth of a trunk not as thick as a man’s wrist. The explanation of this fact is that the summer is so short that, though fresh shoots are brought forth each season, there is no time for the formation of new wood. The further north the more lamentably decrepit becomes the appearance of these woodlands, until presently their sordidness is veiled by thick growths of grey lichens—the “caribou moss,” as it is called—which clothe the trunks and hang down from the shrivelled

boughs. And still further north the trees become mere stunted stems, set with blighted buds that have never been able to develop themselves into branches ; until, finally, the last vestiges of arboreal growth take refuge under a thick carpet of lichens and mosses, the characteristic vegetation of the Barren Grounds.

Nothing more dismal than the winter aspect of these wastes can be imagined. The Northern forests are silent enough in winter-time, but the silence of the Barren Grounds is far more profound. Even in the depths of mid-winter the North-Western bush has voices and is full of animal life. The barking cry of the crows (these birds are the greatest imaginable nuisance to the trapper, whose baits they steal even before his back is turned) is still heard ; the snow-birds and other small-winged creatures are never quiet between sunset and sunrise ; the jack-rabbit, whose black bead-like eye betrays his presence among the snow-drifts in spite of his snow-white fur, is common enough ; and the child-like wailing of the coyotes is heard every night. But with the exception of the shriek of the snow-owl or the yelping of a fox emerged from his lair, there is no sound of life during seven or eight or nine months of winter on the Barren Grounds ; unless the traveller is able to hear the

rushing sound—some can hear it, others cannot—of the shifting Northern lights.

In May, however, when the snows melt and the swamps begin to thaw, the Barren Grounds become full of life. To begin with, the sky is literally darkened with enormous flights of wildfowl, whom instinct brings from the southern reaches of the Mississippi and its tributaries to these sub-Arctic wildernesses, where they find an abundance of food, and at the same time build their nests and rear their young in safety. The snow-geese are the first to arrive; next come the common and eider-duck; after them the great northern black-and-red-throated divers; and last of all the pintail and the long-tail ducks. Some of these go no further than just beyond the outskirts of the forest region; others, flying further northward, lay their eggs in the open on the moss. Eagles and hawks prey on these migratory hosts; troops of ptarmigan (which the writer has seen as far south as Saskatchewan; they are said to go to no place where the mercury does not freeze) seek food among the stunted willows on the shores of the lakes and sloughs; and in sunny weather the snow-bunting's song is heard.

As soon as the first frosts of September begin, all these birds (with the exception of the ptarmigan,

whose presence in the settled parts of North-West Territories is regarded as proof of an extraordinarily severe Arctic winter) depart for the South, the long-tail ducks being the first to leave, and the snow-geese the last.

Soon after the arrival of the migratory birds the wilderness becomes newly clothed in green and grey. The snow, which never once thaws during the long winter, forms a safe protection for vegetable life. Snow is one of the worst conductors of heat known, and no blanket of eiderdown or "robe" of lynx-tails (these make the prettiest and warmest and one of the most costly of coverlets used by Hudson's Bay Company officers) could protect the plant-life of the Far North as well as the four or five feet of snow which cover these Barren Grounds. Thus, when the temperature of the air is  $-40^{\circ}$  F., that of the ground beneath the snow may be not colder than two or three degrees below freezing-point ( $32^{\circ}$  F.), a fact which the writer himself has frequently verified.

As soon as the lengthening summer's day has thawed this coverlet of snows, vegetation comes on at a surprising rate—a week's sunshine on the wet soil completely transforming the aspect of the country. It is then that the caribou leave their winter quarters in the forest region—these animals



are found in winter wherever the "caribou moss," on which they feed and which resemble them in colour, is found—and journey to the Barren Grounds, where the female brings forth her young.

Just as the prairies might have been called "Buffalo-land" thirty years ago, and the intervening enforested country may still be styled "Moose-land"—not that the moose is nearly so common in Saskatchewan and Athabasca as it was before the rebellion of 1885 opened up that country—so from the hunter's point of view "Caribou-land" would be an exceedingly apt name for the *tundri* of Greater Canada. Only the Indians and the Esquimaux (the former living on the confines of the forests, and the latter along the far Arctic coasts) visit these territories, and but for the presence of the vast herds of caribou it is pretty certain that such mosquito-haunted wastes—like the mosquitoes of the Yukon placer-miners, those of the Barren Grounds "seem big as rabbits, and able to bite at both ends"—would never be trodden by man. It is true that the musk-ox is an important inhabitant of the wastes, but the numbers of that strange beast, which seems to be half-sheep, half-ox, are not nearly so great, and there are reasons to believe that it is being slowly but surely driven from its ancient pastures by the

caribou, just as, in so many parts of the world, the nations of the antelope have receded before the deer-tribes. Not enough is known either of the habits of the musk-oxen or of the caribou to say *why* the caribou is getting the best of the struggle for existence ; but that they are gradually forcing the others towards the fies appears to be unquestionable. No doubt the process is just another instance of the survival of the fittest (some third and unknown factor determining which of the two is the fitter), and, so far as the old world is concerned, has been completed hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years ago ; for no musk-oxen have ever been found living either in European Russia or in Siberia, whereas fossil remains of the same or a very analogous species abound on either side of the Urals. However, there are parts of the Barren Grounds (particularly the inner coast-line of the Labradorian Peninsula, where Mr. A. P. Low saw a herd which he estimated to number thirty thousand!) where musk-oxen are still very numerous even in these latter days.

The caribou is, of course, the same animal as the reindeer of the Old World ; unlike the reindeer, however, it has never been domesticated and used as a beast of burden. The Locheux Indians have often been asked why they do not tame the caribou ;

but a superstitious fear that to do so would cause them to desert the country forthwith, together with an aversion to exchange the hunter's existence for a pastoral life, has hitherto prevented the experiment. Apparently, also, the caribou has neither the same intelligence nor even the pulling strength of the reindeer proper; as may be guessed from the fact that "strong as a moose" and "cute as a bear" are not less common expressions among the trappers and hunters of the Far North than the odious comparison, "stupid as a caribou." Without taking such sayings too seriously, it may be said that no beast more readily falls a victim to the hunters, who despise it accordingly.

In the winter the caribou frequents the sub-Arctic forests, living on the "caribou moss" and the lichens beneath the snow. One of the most surprising traits in the creature's character is its instinct for finding hidden stores of such food. Having first made sure that the moss lies below by thrusting the muzzle beneath the surface of the snow, the caribou sets to work with its forefeet until a sufficient pasturage has been dug out—a habit which renders the winter tracking of caribou a very simple matter. They are found in winter-time as far south as Athabasca and the northern half of British Columbia, while they used to be

astonishingly plentiful at that season in Alaska and along the head-waters of the Yukon, until the influx of miners and prospectors frightened them away.

In the summer the caribou migrate to the Barren Grounds, which are, as has been pointed out, their breeding-grounds. Even in winter, though necessarily dispersed here and there through the forests in search of food, they run in herds often numbering many hundreds; but when their forces are collected for the spring migration, the strength of the herd is almost incredible. Thus at "Caribou Crossing" on the Upper Yukon, herds estimated at from fifty to ninety thousand used to be seen every season by the Hudson's Bay servants stationed at Fort Selkirk in the early fifties; and even in these latter days—"these game-forsaken days," as the writer once heard an old-timer call them—herds many thousand strong are annually seen passing across the eastern verge of the Mackenzie valley-forest to the plains about the Hudson's Bay and the Great Bear and Great Slave Lakes. They keep to the same routes year after year, and these trails (which are often indicated by the Indian place-names, one or two of which appear on the maps) may easily be traced by the bones of those who have fallen on the march, victims either

to disease or to the teeth and bullets of their arch enemies, the wolverine and the Chipewyan respectively.

The number of caribou skins taken annually by the North-Western traders (of which the Hudson's Bay Company buys two-thirds) exceeds eighty thousand. This number does not include those used by Indian and other hunters and trappers for their own clothing. It would therefore appear that the foregoing statistics are not merely "hunters' tales," but must have a foundation in fact.

It is not easy to obtain reliable information regarding the habits of the caribou in its summer pastures. The Indian or half-breed hunter is not a trained naturalist, and about the only habit of the animal in which he takes any particular interest is its habit of occasionally passing down his throat — as the writer has heard it said. Nevertheless, a few facts of interest are obtainable. Thus the wolverine or American glutton, by far the largest of the weasel tribe, is the caribou's natural enemy. Curious yarns are told of this creature's appetite for caribou-meat, but the plain truth is that, like most of his tribe, he only eats the flesh of his quarry when he cannot get his fill of fresh blood. Wolverines follow and prey on the herds throughout the winter, a single wolverine

often killing half a dozen in a day, and leaving each carcase as soon as he has sucked out as much fresh bright blood as he cares for at the time being. He is, in fact, rather a gourmand than a glutton.

The caribou is said to "carry his scent" in the cleft of the hoof; so that the wolverine is able to track him over naked soil very much as a stoat hunts a hare in the mother country. In May, however, the female altogether loses her scent, and is thus able to elude her enemy in the Barren Grounds and bring forth her calf in peace and security—which may be a mere consequence, as the savants tell us, of the law of natural selection; but by those simple-minded Scotchmen, whose faith has been strengthened by a life spent in the Far North, is always quoted as a signal instance of the merciful foresight of an Almighty Creator.

As has already been hinted, there is little sport in caribou-shooting. The caribou is easily approached, and when fired at jumps to and fro as though undecided what to do. It will then run a short distance, but just as likely towards the hunter as from him, stop again and again, and finally (after a number of false starts, and perhaps not until many of its companions have been killed) will go

off on a continuous run. Once a herd of caribou begin to run they will not stop till forty or fifty miles have been covered. When the Indians find a herd they surround it, gradually contracting the circle thus formed, until they are within gunshot; and the caribou, too timid to take the chance of escaping by a sudden rush, allow themselves to be killed wholesale. Another plan is to build a V-shaped fence at the head of some convenient valley, and the herd, being driven along the valley, find their retreat to the uplands barred, and, not daring to charge and break down the obstacle, are sometimes slaughtered to a beast. As happened in the case of the buffalo, the Indians often kill far more than they can use, slaying for slaughter's sake, and without the excuse either of the wolverine (who is artistic in his diet), or of the old-time buffalo-runner, who cared for no part of the buffalo but the "robe" and tongue. Generally in the latter half of the winter the caribou is so poor in condition as to be absolutely worthless; and in summer a species of gad-fly which lays its eggs under the hide (with the result that the whole of the flesh is full of larvæ) often renders his meat useless, except to those who have nothing better to eat than their own, or even their companions', skin breeches and moccasins. Nevertheless, the Indians



will kill them under these circumstances, or when heavy with young, in spite of the orders of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose officers have always, unlike the "free-traders," done all in their power for the preservation of game in their domains.

Just as the Indians of the Great Plains (Sioux, Blackfeet, etc.) depended mainly on buffalo-running for their livelihood and clothing; and just as the Indians of the forest-region (the Crees and lesser stocks) were and are moose-hunters,—so the Chipewyans of the north (the Locheux in the furthest north-east and north-west,\* the Chipewyans proper in the centre of the Mackenzie Basin, and the Beavers of the Peace Country, are the chief branches of that race) are first and last and by force of environment, caribou-hunters. In their original condition they were purely nomadic, the difficulty of finding food in sufficient quantities for any length of time making it necessary for them to split up into very small bands and wander over the great spaces of country. The Hudson's Bay Company, by providing a constant market for furs, and helping these small bands with food and

\* By some authorities the Locheux are classed as a race apart; a classification supported by a study of their language and racial customs.

medicines in times of want and disease, have to a certain extent improved their condition ; and in the case of the North-Western Locheux (those, that is, who live in the territories drained by the Peel River and the Yukon and its tributaries) the advent of the placer-miners has transformed their existence not altogether for the better. On the Mackenzie, however, the Chipewyans live very much as they did before the coming of "The Company." During the winter, when they sojourn on the limits of the forest as a rule, they seldom remain in the same camp for more than a week at a time ; for whenever the caribou within hunting distance (say within a radius of eight or ten miles from camp) are slain or frightened away, it becomes absolutely necessary to move on. The custom is for the men to take the lead, "breaking track" as they go, and for the women and children to follow, hauling along the tepees and the band's other possessions (a few pots and pans, a few robes and furs, and little besides) on sleighs. On arriving at the spot selected for the camp, each man marks on the snow the place for his lodge, and sets off forthwith in search of game, while the squaws clear away the snow, chop fuel, and prepare a meal against the men's return. If game is found, all goes merrily till it is eaten and there ceases to be

anything within hunting distance. If not, after a night's rest the doleful march through the snow is resumed. The average winter temperature of the Mackenzie Basin is  $-20^{\circ}$  F.; so that this method of life does not tend to length of days, and soon kills off those who are affected with any physical incapacity.

In summer these bands often follow the caribou to the Barren Grounds, but such is not their invariable custom. It is generally necessary for the hunters to visit one or other of the Hudson's Bay Company forts to sell their furs, and time for summer hunting is not always left. And if they enter the Barren Grounds they do not go in for further than a few days' journey, following some water-route; so that except for the inland boundaries and those to seaward, where the Esquimaux live, these endless wastes are left as a sanctuary for their four-footed and winged visitors.

Unless mineral discoveries are made in the Barren Grounds it is unlikely that permanent habitations of men will arise there. As to the possibility or probability of such discoveries, it is impossible to speak to any purpose. Stories are, however, current as to the existence of auriferous sands in the country between the Mackenzie and the Bay, and as some of these were told in the

North-West before the Klondike was spoken of, there may be something in them after all. As yet, however, the Barren Grounds cannot be recommended as a likely field for prospectors—in spite of the discoveries in Siberia!

## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

### ROYAL CHARTER FOR INCORPORATING THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

GRANTED A.D. 1670

CHARLES the Second, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c., to all to whom these presents shall come, greeting :

Whereas our dear and entirely beloved cousin, Prince Rupert, Count Palatine of the Rhine, Duke of Bavaria and Cumberland, &c. ; Christopher, Duke of Albemarle ; William, Earl of Craven ; Henry, Lord Arlington ; Anthony, Lord Ashley ; Sir John Robinson, and Sir Robert Vyner, Knights and Baronets ; Sir Peter Colleton, Baronet ; Sir Edward Hungerford, Knight of the Bath ; Sir Paul Neele, Knight ; Sir John Griffith and Sir Philip Carteret, Knights ; James Hayes, John Kirke, Francis Millington, William Prettyman, John Fenn, Esquires ; and John Portman, Citizen and Goldsmith of London ; have, at their own great cost and charges, undertaken an expedition for Hudson's Bay, in the north-west part of America, for the discovery of a new passage into the South Sea, and for the finding some



trade for furs, minerals and other considerable commodities, and by such, their undertaking, have already made such discoveries as do encourage them to proceed further in pursuance of their said design, by means whereof there may probably arise very great advantage to us and our kingdom: And, whereas the said undertakers for their further encouragement in the said design, have humbly besought us to incorporate them, and grant unto them and their successors the sole trade and commerce of all those seas, straits, bays, rivers, lakes, creeks and sounds, in whatsoever latitude they shall be, that lie within the entrance of the straits, commonly called Hudson's Straits, together with all the lands, countries and territories upon the coasts and confines of the seas, straits, bays, lakes, rivers, creeks and sounds, aforesaid, which are not now actually possessed by any of our subjects, or by the subjects of any other Christian Prince or State. Now Know Ye, that we, being desirous to promote all endeavors tending to the public good of our people, and to encourage the said undertaking, have of our special grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, given, granted, ratified and confirmed, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, do give, grant, ratify and confirm unto our said cousin, Prince Rupert, Christopher, Duke of Albemarle; William, Earl of Craven; Henry, Lord Arlington; Anthony, Lord Ashley; Sir John Robinson, Sir Robert Vyner, Sir Peter Colleton, Sir Edward Hungerford, Sir Paul Neele, Sir John Griffith and Sir Philip Carteret, James Hayes, John Kirke, Francis Millington, William Prettyman, John Fenn and John Portman, that they, and such others as shall be admitted into the said society as

is hereafter expressed, shall be one body, corporate and politic, in deed and in name, by the name of "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay," and them by the name of the "Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay" one body corporate and politic, in deed and in name, really and fully forever, for us, our heirs and successors, we do make, ordain, constitute, establish, confirm and declare by these presents, and that by the name of "Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay," they shall have perpetual succession, and that they and their successors, by the name of "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay," be, and at all times hereafter shall be, personable and capable in law, to have, purchase, receive, possess, enjoy and retain lands, rents, privileges, liberties, jurisdictions, franchises and hereditaments, of what kind, nature or quality soever they may be, to them and their successors; and also to give, grant, demise, alien, assign and dispose lands, tenements and hereditaments, and to do and execute all and singular other things by the same name that to them shall or may appertain to do; and that they and their successors, by the name of "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay," may plead and be impleaded, answer and be answered, defend and be defended, in whatsoever courts and places, before whatsoever judges and justices, and other persons and officers, in all and singular actions, pleas, suits, quarrels, causes and demands whatsoever, of whatsoever kind, nature or sort, in such manner and form as

any other our liege people of this our realm of England, being persons able and capable in law, may or can have, purchase, receive, possess, enjoy, retain, give, grant, demise, alien, assign, dispose, plead, defend and be defended, do permit and execute; and that the said "Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay," and their successors may have a common seal to serve for all the causes and businesses of them and their successors, and that it shall and may be lawful to the said Governor and Company and their successors, the same seal, from time to time, at their will and pleasure, to break, change, and to make anew or alter, as to them shall seem expedient. And further, we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do ordain that there shall be from henceforth one of the same Company, to be elected and appointed in such form as hereafter in these presents is expressed, which shall be called the Governor of the said Company; and that the said Governor and Company, shall or may elect seven of their number, in such form as hereafter in these presents is expressed, which shall be called the Committee of the said Company, which Committee of seven, or any three of them, together with the Governor or Deputy-Governor of the said Company for the time being, shall have the direction of the voyages of and for the said Company, and the provision of the shipping and merchandises thereunto belonging, and also the sale of all merchandises, goods and other things returned, in all or any of the voyages or ships of or for the said Company, and the managing and handling of all other business, affairs and things belonging to the said Company. And we will, ordain,

and grant by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, unto the said Governor and Company, and their successors, that they the said Governor and Company and their successors shall from henceforth, forever be ruled, ordered and governed, according to such manner and form as is hereafter in these presents expressed, and not otherwise; and that they shall have, hold, retain and enjoy the grants, liberties, privileges, jurisdictions, and immunities only hereafter in these presents granted and expressed, and no other: And for the better execution of our will and grant in this behalf, we have assigned, nominated, constituted and made, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do assign, nominate, constitute and make our said cousin, Prince Rupert, to be the first and present Governor of the said Company, and to continue in the said office, from the date of these presents until the 10th November then next following, if he, the said Prince Rupert, shall so long live, and so until a new Governor be chosen by the said Company, in form hereafter expressed: And also we have assigned, nominated and appointed, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do assign, nominate and constitute, the said Sir John Robinson, Sir Robert Vyner, Sir Peter Colleton, James Hayes, John Kirke, Francis Millington and John Portman, to be the seven first and present Committees of the said Company, from the date of these presents until the said 10th day of November then also next following, and so until new Committees shall be chosen in form hereafter expressed: And further we will and grant by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, unto the said Governor and Company, and their successors, that it

shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor and Company for the time being, or the greater part of them present at any public assembly, commonly called the Court General, to be holden for the said Company, the Governor of the said Company being always one, from time to time to elect, nominate and appoint one of the said Company to be Deputy to the said Governor, which Deputy shall take a corporal oath, before the Governor and three or more of the Committee of the said Company for the time being, well, truly and faithfully to execute his said office of Deputy to the Governor of the said Company, and after his oath so taken shall and may from time to time in the absence of the said Governor, exercise and execute the office of Governor of the said Company, in such sort as the said Governor ought to do: And further we will and grant by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, unto the said Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, and their successors, that they, or the greater part of them, whereof the Governor for the time being or his Deputy to be one, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, shall and may have authority and power, yearly and every year, between the first and last day of November, to assemble and meet together in some convenient place, to be appointed from time to time by the Governor, or in his absence by the Deputy of the said Governor for the time being, and that they being so assembled, it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor or Deputy of the said Governor, and the said Company for the time being, or the greater part of them which then shall happen to be present, whereof the Governor of the said Company or

his Deputy for the time being to be one, to elect and nominate one of the said Company, which shall be Governor of the said Company for one whole year then next following, which person being so elected and nominated to be Governor of the said Company as is aforesaid, before he be admitted to the execution of the said office, shall take a corporal oath before the last Governor, being his predecessor or his Deputy, and any three or more of the Committee of the said Company for the time being, that he shall from time to time well and truly execute the office of Governor of the said Company in all things concerning the same; and that immediately after the same oath so taken, he shall and may execute and use the said office of Governor of the said Company for one whole year from thence next following: And in like sort we will and grant, that as well, every one of the above-named to be of the said Company, or Fellowship, as all others hereafter to be admitted or free of the said Company, shall take a corporal oath before the Governor of the said Company or his Deputy for the time being, to such effect as by the said Governor and Company, or the greater part of them, in any public Court to be held for the said Company, shall be in reasonable or legal manner set down and devised, before they shall be allowed or admitted to trade or traffic as a freeman of the said Company: And further we will and grant by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, unto the said Governor and Company, and their successors, that the said Governor or Deputy-Governor, and the rest of the said Company, and their successors for the time being, or the greater part of them, whereof the Governor or



Deputy-Governor from time to time to be one, shall and may from time to time, and at all times hereafter, have power and authority, yearly and every year, between the first and last day of November, to assemble and meet together in some convenient place, from time to time to be appointed by the said Governor of the said Company, or in his absence, by his Deputy ; and that they being so assembled, it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor or his Deputy, and the Company for the time being, or the greater part of them, which then shall happen to be present, whereof the Governor of the said Company or his Deputy for the time being to be one, to elect and nominate seven of the said Company, which shall be a Committee of the said Company for one whole year from the next ensuing, which persons being so elected and nominated to be a Committee of the said Company as aforesaid, before they be admitted to the execution of their office, shall take a corporal oath before the Governor or his Deputy, and any three or more of the said Committee of the said Company, being their last predecessors, that they and every of them shall and faithfully perform their said office of Committees in all things concerning the same, and that immediately after the said oath so taken, they shall and may execute and use their said office of Committees of the said Company, for one whole year from thence next following : And moreover our will and pleasure is, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do grant unto the said Governor and Company, and their successors, that when and as often as it shall happen the Governor or Deputy-Governor of the said Company, for the time being, at any time within one year after that he



shall be nominated, elected and sworn to the office of the Governor of the said Company, as is aforesaid, to die or to be removed from the said office, which Governor or Deputy-Governor, not demeaning himself well in his said office, we will to be removable at the pleasure of the rest of the said Company, or the greater part of them which shall be present at their public assemblies, commonly called their general courts, holden for the said Company, that then and so often, it shall and may be lawful to and for the residue of the said Company, for the time being, or the greater part of them, within a convenient time after the death or removing of any such Governor or Deputy-Governor, to assemble themselves in such convenient place as they shall think fit, for the election of the Governor or Deputy-Governor, of the said Company ; and that the said Company, or the greater part of them, being then and there present, shall and may, then and there, before their departure from the said place, elect and nominate one other of the said Company to be Governor or Deputy-Governor for the said Company, in the place and stead of him that so died or was removed ; which person, being so elected and nominated to the office of Governor or Deputy-Governor of the said Company, shall have and exercise the said office for and during the residue of the said year, taking first a corporal oath, as is aforesaid, for the due execution thereof ; and this to be done from time to time so often as the case shall so require : And also, our will and pleasure is, and by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, we do grant unto the said Governor and Company, that when, and as often as it shall happen, any person or persons of the Committee of the said Company, for the time being,

at any time within one year next after that they or any of them shall be nominated, elected and sworn to the office of Committee of the said Company, as is aforesaid, to die or be removed from the said office, which Committees not demeaning themselves well in their said office, we will to be removable at the pleasure of the said Governor and Company, or the greater part of them, whereof the Governor of the said Company, for the time being, or his Deputy, to be one, that then and so often, it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor, and the rest of the Company for the time being, or the greater part of them, whereof the Governor, for the time being, or his Deputy to be one, within convenient time after the death or removing of any of the said Committee, to assemble themselves in such convenient place as is or shall be usual and accustomed for the election of the Governor of the said Company, or where else the Governor of the said Company, for the time being, or his Deputy shall appoint: And that the said Governor and Company, or the greater part of them, whereof the Governor, for the time being, or his Deputy to be one, being then and there present, shall and may, then and there, before their departure from the said place, elect and nominate one or more of the said Company to be of the Committee of the said Company in the place and stead of him or them that so died, or were or was so removed, which person or persons so nominated and elected to the office of Committee of the said Company, shall have and exercise the said office for and during the residue of the said year, taking first a corporal oath, as is aforesaid, for the due execution thereof, and this to be done from time to

time, so often as the case shall require : And to the end the said Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay, may be encouraged to undertake and effectually to prosecute the said design, of our more especial grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, we have given, granted, and confirmed, and by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, do give, grant and confirm, unto the said Governor and Company, and their successors, the sole trade and commerce of all those seas, straits, bays, rivers, lakes, creeks and sounds, in whatsoever latitude they shall be, that lie within the entrance of the straits commonly called Hudson's Straits, together with all the lands and territories upon the countries, coasts, and confines of the seas, bays, lakes, rivers, creeks, and sounds aforesaid, that are not already actually possessed by or granted to any of our subjects, or possessed by the subjects of any other Christian Prince or State, with the fishing of all sorts of fish, whales, sturgeons, and all other royal fishes in the seas, bays, inlets, and rivers within the premises, and the fish therein taken, together with the royalty of the sea upon the coasts within the limits aforesaid, and all mines royal, as well discovered as not discovered, of gold, silver, gems, and precious stones, to be found or discovered within the territories, limits and places aforesaid, and that the said land be from henceforth reckoned and reputed as one of our plantations or colonies in America, called "Rupert's Land : " And further, we do, by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, make, create and constitute the said Governor and Company, for the time being, and their successors, the true and absolute lords and proprietors of the same territory, limits and

places aforesaid, and of all other the premises, saving always the faith, allegiance and sovereign dominion due to us, our heirs and successors, for the same, to have, hold, possess and enjoy the said territory, limits and places, and all and singular other the premises, hereby granted as aforesaid, with their and every of their rights, members, jurisdictions, prerogatives, royalties and appurtenances whatsoever, to them, the said Governor and Company, and their successors for ever, to be holden of us, our heirs and successors, as of our manor of East Greenwich, in our county of Kent, in free and common soccage, and not in capite or by knight's service; yielding and paying yearly to us, our heirs and successors, for the same, two elks and two black beavers, whensoever and as often as we, our heirs and successors, shall happen to enter into the said countries, territories and regions hereby granted: And further, our will and pleasure is, and by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, we do grant unto the said Governor and Company, and to their successors, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor and Company, and to their successors, from time to time, to assemble themselves, for or about any the matters, causes, affairs or businesses of the said trade, in any place or places for the same convenient, within our dominions or elsewhere, and there to hold court for the said Company, and the affairs thereof; and that also, it shall and may be lawful to and for them, and the greater part of them, being so assembled, and that shall then and there be present, in any such place or places, whereof the Governor or his Deputy, for the time being, to be one, to make, ordain and constitute such and so many reasonable laws,

constitutions, orders and ordinances as to them, or the greater part of them, being then and there present, shall seem necessary and convenient for the good government of the said Company, and of all governors of colonies, forts and plantations, factors, masters, mariners, and other officers employed, or to be employed, in any of the territories and lands aforesaid, and in any of their voyages; and for the better advancement and continuance of the said trade or traffic, and plantations, and the same laws, constitutions, orders and ordinances so made, to put in, use and execute accordingly, and at their pleasure to revoke and alter the same, or any of them, as the occasion shall require; and that the said Governor and Company, so often as they shall make, ordain, or establish any such laws, constitutions, orders and ordinances, in such form as aforesaid, shall and may lawfully impose, ordain, limit, and provide such pains, penalties, and punishments upon all offenders, contrary to such laws, constitutions, orders and ordinances, or any of them, as to the said Governor and Company, for the time being, or the greater part of them, then and there being present, the said Governor or his Deputy being always one, shall seem necessary, requisite, or convenient for the observation of the same laws, constitutions, orders, and ordinances; and the same fines and amerciaments shall and may, by their officers and servants, from time to time to be appointed for that purpose, levy, take and have, to the use of the said Governor and Company, and their successors, without the impediment of us, our heirs, or successors, or of any the officers or ministers of us, our heirs, or successors, and without any account therefor to us, our heirs, or

successors, to be made: All and singular which laws, constitutions, orders and ordinances, so as aforesaid to be made, we will to be duly observed and kept under the pains and penalties therein to be contained; so always as the said laws, constitutions, orders and ordinances, fines and amerciaments, be reasonable, and not contrary or repugnant, but as near as may be agreeable to the laws, statutes or customs of this our realm: And furthermore, of our ample and abundant grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, we have granted, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, do grant unto the said Governor and Company, and their successors, that they and their successors, and their factors, servants, and agents, for them and on their behalf, and not otherwise, shall forever hereafter have, use and enjoy, not only the whole, entire and only trade and traffic, and the whole, entire and only liberty, use and privilege of trading and trafficking to and from the territories, limits, and places aforesaid; but also the whole and entire trade and traffic to and from all havens, bays, creeks, rivers, lakes and seas, into which they shall find entrance or passage by water or land out of the territories, limits or places aforesaid; and to and with all the natives and people inhabiting, or which shall inhabit within the territories, limits and places aforesaid; and to and with all other nations inhabiting any of the coasts adjacent to the said territories, limits and places which are not already possessed as aforesaid, or whereof the sole liberty or privilege of trade and traffic is not granted to any other of our subjects: And we, of our further royal favor, and of our more especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, have granted, and by these presents,



for us, our heirs and successors, do grant to the said Governor and Company, and to their successors, that neither the said territories, limits and places, hereby granted as aforesaid, nor any part thereof, nor the islands, havens, ports, cities, towns, or places thereof, or therein contained, shall be visited, frequented, or haunted by any of the subjects of us, our heirs, or successors, contrary to the true meaning of these presents, and by virtue of our prerogative royal, which we will not have in that behalf argued or brought into question: We strictly charge, command and prohibit for us, our heirs and successors, all the subjects of us, our heirs and successors, of what degree or quality soever they be, that none of them, directly or indirectly, do visit, haunt, frequent or trade, traffic, or adventure, by way of merchandise, into or from any of the said territories, limits or places hereby granted, or any, or either of them, other than the said Governor and Company, and such particular persons as now be, or hereafter shall be, of that Company, their agents, factors and assigns, unless it be by the license and agreement of the said Governor and Company, in writing first had and obtained, under the common seal, to be granted, upon pain that every such person or persons that shall trade or traffic into or from any of the countries, territories or limits aforesaid, other than the said Governor and Company, and their successors, shall incur our indignation, and the forfeiture and loss of the goods, merchandise, and other things whatsoever, which so shall be brought into this realm of England, or any of the dominions of the same, contrary to our said prohibition, or the purport or true meaning of these presents, for which the said Governor and Company



shall find, take and seize in other places out of our dominions, where the said Company, their agents, factors or ministers, shall trade, traffic, or inhabit, by virtue of these our letter patent, as also the ship and ships, with the furniture thereof, wherein such goods, merchandises, and other things, shall be brought and found, the one-half of all the said forfeitures to be to us, our heirs and successors, and the other half thereof we do by these presents clearly and wholly, for us, our heirs and successors, give and grant unto the said Governor and Company, and their successors: And further, all and every the said offenders, for the said contempt, to suffer such other punishment as to us, our heirs and successors, for so high a contempt, shall seem meet and convenient, and not to be in any wise delivered until they and every one of them shall become bound into the said Governor for the time being, in the sum of one thousand pounds at the least, at no time thereafter to trade or traffic into any of the said places, seas, straits, bays, ports, havens, or territories aforesaid, contrary to our express commandment in that behalf set down and published: And further, of our more especial grace, we have condescended and granted, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, do grant unto the said Governor and Company, and their successors, that we, our heirs and successors, will not grant liberty, license or power to any person or persons whatsoever, contrary to the tenor of these our letters patent, to trade, traffic, or inhabit, unto or upon any the territories, limits or places afore specified, contrary to the true meaning of these presents, without the consent of the said Governor and Company, or the most part of them: And, of our

more abundant grace and favor to the said Governor and Company, we do hereby declare our will and pleasure to be, that if it shall so happen that any of the persons free or to be free of the said Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, who shall, before the going forth of any ship or ships appointed for a voyage or otherwise, promise or agree, by writing under his or their hands, to adventure any sum or sums of money towards the furnishing any provision or maintenance of any voyage or voyages, set forth, or to be set forth, or intended or meant to be set forth, by the said Governor and Company, or the more part of them present at any public assembly, commonly called their general court, shall not within the space of twenty days next after warning given to him or them by the said Governor or Company, or their known officer or minister, bring in and deliver to the Treasurer or Treasurers, appointed for the Company, such sums of money as shall have been expressed and set down in writing by the said person or persons, subscribed with the name of said adventurer or adventurers, that then and at all times after it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor and Company, or the more part of them present, whereof the said Governor or his Deputy to be one, at any of their general courts or general assemblies, to remove and disfranchise him or them, and every such person and persons at their wills and pleasures, and he or they so removed and disfranchised, not to be permitted to trade into the countries, territories, and limits aforesaid, or any part thereof, nor to have any adventure or stock going or remaining with or amongst the said Company, without the special license of the said Governor and Company,

or the more part of them present at any General Court, first had and obtained in that behalf, any thing before in these presents to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding : And our will and pleasure is, and hereby we do also ordain, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor and Company, or the greater part of them, whereof the Governor for the time being or his Deputy to be one, to admit into and to be of the said Company all such servants and factors, of or for the said Company, and all such others as to them or the most part of them present, at any Court held for the said Company, the Governor or his Deputy being one, shall be thought fit and agreeable with the orders and ordinances made and to be made for the Government of the said Company : And further, our will and pleasure is, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do grant unto the said Governor and Company, and to their successors, that it shall and may be lawful in all elections and by-laws to be made by the General Court of the Adventurers of the said Company that every person shall have a number of votes according to his stock, that is to say, for every hundred pounds by him subscribed or brought into the present stock, one vote, and that any of those that have subscribed less than one hundred pounds, may join their respective sums to make up one hundred pounds, and have one vote jointly for the same, and not otherwise : And further of our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, we do for us, our heirs and successors, grant to and with the said Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, that all lands, islands, territories, plantations, forts, fortifications, factories or

colonies, where the said Company's factories and trade are or shall be, within the posts or places afore limited, shall be immediately and from henceforth under the power and command of the said Governor and Company, their successors and assigns; saving the faith and allegiance due to be performed to us, our heirs and successors as aforesaid; and that the said Governor and Company shall have liberty, full power and authority to appoint and establish Governors and all other officers to govern them, and that the Governor and his Council of the severall and respective places where the said Company shall have plantations, forts, factories, colonies, or places of trade within any of the countries, lands or territories hereby granted may have power to judge all persons belonging to the said Governor and Company, or that shall live under them, in all causes, whether civil or criminal, according to the laws of this kingdom, and to execute justice accordingly; and in case any crime or misdemeanour shall be committed in any of the said Company's plantations, forts, factories, or places of trade within the limits aforesaid, where judicature cannot be executed for want of a Governor and Council there, then in such case it shall and may be lawful for the chief factor of that place and his Council to transmit the party, together with the offence, to such other plantation, factory or fort where there shall be a Governor and Council, where justice may be executed, or into this kingdom of England, as shall be thought most convenient, there to receive such punishment as the nature of his offence shall deserve: And, moreover, our will and pleasure is, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do give and grant unto the said Governor

and Company, and their successors, free liberty and license, in case they conceive it necessary, to send either ships of war, men or ammunition, unto any of their plantations, forts, factories or places of trade aforesaid, for the security and defence of the same, and to choose commanders and officers over them, and to give them power and authority, by commission under their common seal, or otherwise, to continue or make peace or war with any prince or people whatsoever, that are not Christians, in any places where the said Company shall have any plantations, forts, or factories, or adjacent thereunto, as shall be most for the advantage and benefit of the said Governor and Company, and of their trade; and also to right and recompense themselves upon the goods, estates or people of those posts, by whom the said Governor and Company shall sustain any injury, loss or damage, or upon any other people whatsoever that shall any way, contrary to the intent of these presents, interrupt, wrong, or injure them in their said trade, within the said places, territories, and limits granted by this charter. And that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor and Company, and their successors, from time to time, and at all times from henceforth, to erect and build such castles, fortifications, forts, garrisons, colonies, or plantations, towns or villages, in any post or places within the limits and bounds granted before in these presents unto the said Governor and Company, as they in their discretion shall think fit and requisite, and for the supply of such as shall be needful and convenient; to keep and be in the same, to send out of this kingdom, to the said castles, forts, fortifications, garrisons, colonies, plantations, towns or

villages, all kinds of clothing, provision of victuals, ammunition and implements necessary for such purpose, paying the duties and customs for the same, as also to transport and carry over such number of men, being willing themselves, or not prohibited, as they shall think fit, and also to govern them in such legal and reasonable manner as the said Governor and Company shall think best, and to inflict punishment for misdemeanours or impose such fines upon them for breach of their orders, as in these presents are formerly expressed : And further, our will and pleasure is, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do grant unto the said Governor and Company, and to their successors, full power and lawful authority to seize upon the persons of all such English, or any other our subjects which shall sail into Hudson's Bay, or inhabit in any of the countries, islands or territories hereby granted to the said Governor and Company, without their leave and license in that behalf first had and obtained, or that shall condemn or disobey their orders, and send them to England ; and that all and every person or persons, being our subjects, any ways employed by the said Governor and Company, within any the parts, places, and limits aforesaid, shall be liable unto and suffer such punishment for any offences by them committed in the parts aforesaid, as the President and Council for the said Governor and Company there shall think fit, and the merit for the offence shall require, as aforesaid ; and in case any person or persons being convicted and sentenced by the President and Council of the said Governor and Company, in the countries, lands, or limits aforesaid, their factors or agents there, for any offence by them



done, shall appeal from the same, that then and in such case it shall and may be lawful to and for the said President and Council, factors or agents, to seize upon him or them, and to carry him or them home prisoners into England, to the said Governor and Company, there to receive such condign punishment as his cause shall require, and the laws of this nation allow of; and for the better discovery of abuses and injuries to be done unto the said Governor and Company, or their successors, by any servant by them to be employed in the said voyages and plantations, it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor and Company, and their respective President, Chief Agent or Governor in the parts aforesaid, to examine upon oath all factors, masters, pursers, supercargoes, commanders of castles, forts, fortifications, plantations or colonies, or other persons, touching or concerning any matter or thing in which by law or usage an oath may be administered, so as the said oath, and the matter therein contained, be not repugnant, but agreeable to the laws of this realm: and we do hereby strictly charge and command all and singular our Admirals, Vice-Admirals, Justices, Mayors, Sheriffs, Constables, Bailiffs, and all and singular other our officers, ministers, liege men and subjects whatsoever, to be aiding, favouring, helping and assisting to the said Governor and Company, and to their successors, and to their deputies, officers, factors, servants, assigns and ministers, and every of them, executing, and enjoying the premises as well on land as on sea, from time to time, when any of you shall thereunto be required: Any statute, act, ordinance, proviso, proclamation or restraint heretofore had, made, set forth, ordained, or provided



or any other matter, cause or thing whatsoever to the contrary in anywise notwithstanding. In witness whereof we have caused these our Letters to be made Patent. Witness ourself at Westminster, the second day of May, in the two-and-twentieth year of our reign.

By Writ of Privy Seal.

PIGOTT.

## APPENDIX B

### INDIAN TREATIES

WHEN Rupert's Land was transferred to Canada, one of the gravest questions of the day was the maintenance of friendly relations with the Indian tribes inhabiting that vast territory. The Hudson's Bay Company, Canada's predecessors in this sovereignty, had held, for many long years, their goodwill; but on their sway coming to an end the Indian mind was perplexed, not only by the events of 1869-70 in the Red River region, but also by the appearance of white settlers and traders. In Manitoba white settlers took possession of the soil, and made for themselves homes; and as time went on steamboats were placed on the inland waters, surveyors passed through their hunting-grounds, and the "speaking wires" (as the Indians called the telegraph) were set up here and there. No wonder that a chief of the Plain Crees, looking up at the strange curved lines crossing his sky, exclaimed to his people, "We have done foolishly to allow that wire to be put there, before the Government obtained our leave to do so. There is a white chief at Red River, and that wire speaks to him, and if we do anything wrong he will

stretch out a long arm and catch hold of us before we can hide ourselves."

The Government of Canada, however, anticipating the probabilities of such a state of affairs, resolved that formal alliances should be formed with the Indian tribes at the same time as their rule was formally established on the Plains. It was in 1870 that the Parliament of Canada created the machinery of the Province of Manitoba and of the North-West Territories, and in the following year the first of the seven Indian Treaties, whereby the Indian titles (by prior occupation) to all the land within the Fertile Belt were extinguished, was entered upon and diplomatically completed.

There were three precedents for these Treaties :

1. A treaty made between the Earl of Selkirk and a number of Crees and Saulteaux, whereby the Indian title to a parcel of land on the Red and Assiniboine Rivers was formally extinguished. The Indians were made to comprehend the depth of the land they were surrendering by being told that it was the greatest distance at which the daylight under the belly of a horse standing on the level prairie could be seen. And the consideration for the surrender was the payment, annually to each nation, of one hundred pounds of good merchantable tobacco.

2. The "Robinson Treaties," made in 1850 by the Hon. W. B. Robinson of Toronto with the Indians of the shores and islands of Lakes Superior and Huron. A special feature of this sequence of Treaties was the adjustment of claims preferred by the Indians to receive the amount paid to the Government for the sale of

mining locations. The total number of Indians affected was 2662, to whom an indemnity of £4000 and an annuity of about £1000 were granted.

3. The Treaty made with Indians dwelling on Great Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron by the Hon. W. M. McDougall in 1862, whereby their title to a large portion of land suitable for settlement was extinguished.

At the time Treaty No. 1 was carried through, in 1871, the Indian population with which the Dominion authorities desired to deal was distributed as follows:—

(a) The Ojibewas, Chippeways, or Saulteaux, as they now call themselves, were numerous both in Kee-wa-tin and Manitoba, and a few were to be found in the Territories. These Indians migrated from the older Provinces of Quebec and Ontario at the beginning of the century.

(b) The Crees inhabited the North-West Territories for the most part; they were known as Plain, Wood, and Swampy Crees, according to the nature of the region they lived in. The Swampies resided in Kee-wa-tin and parts of Manitoba.

(c) The Black Feet nation inhabited the slopes of the Rockies and the most westerly portion of the Prairies.

(d) A few Chippewyans or Northerners still dwelt in the more northerly districts of the Territories.

(e) The nation of the Assiniboines or Stonies (exceedingly powerful and numerous in Verandrye's days, and in the earlier years of the century) were but few in number and only to be found in the Territories.

(f) The Sioux in the Dominion at that time were

refugees from the United States, having taken refuge there in 1862-3 after the massacre of the whites by Indians in Minnesota. Though on several occasions the United States authorities offered these refugees protection and absolution for past offences, they could not be persuaded to return, and they remained in parts of Manitoba and Assiniboia, where the settlers found their help very useful in grain-cutting, making fence-rails, and ploughing. They also hunted, trapped, and fished at certain seasons. After the settlement of the Saulteaux, their hereditary enemies, these bands were granted reserves on the Assiniboine River in 1874. Another band received a reserve at Turtle Mountains in 1876. In 1877, after the annihilation of Custer's command, Sitting Bull and his Sioux warriors entered Canadian territory; these refugees were followed by numerous other bands, until between five and six thousand American Indians were living in the Canadian North-West. There were suggestions that reserves should be granted to these people, but they were never seriously entertained by the authorities, and the surrender to the United States authorities in 1881 at Fort Burford of Sitting Bull and his followers finally settled a difficult and somewhat ominous problem.

The Seven Treaties made from 1871 to 1877, as the tide of immigration spread along the Fertile Belt, provided for the following changes:—

1. The relinquishment, in all the vast region from Lake Superior to the foot of the Rockies, of all the right and title to the ownership of the lands covered by the Treaties, 'saving and except certain reservations for their own use. And, in return for such relinquishment:

2. Permission to the Indians to hunt over the ceded territory, and to fish in the waters thereof, excepting such portions of the territory as pass from the Crown into the occupation of individuals from time to time.

3. The perpetual payment of annuities of \$5 per head to every Indian—man, woman, or child. The payment of an annual salary of \$25 to each chief, and of \$15 to each councillor, or head man, of a chief, so that each of these became in a sense officers of the Crown; and in addition, official clothing for both chiefs and councillors, together with British flags and silver medals for the chiefs.

The gift of red coats and Union Jacks to the chiefs and councillors emphasized their position as officers of the Queen. Medals were given, as in the United States, in accordance with an ancient custom, and are much prized and cherished by the owners and their families. Indians often exhibit old medals, bearing the likeness of the king before the American War of Independence, which have passed down from hand to hand as heirlooms. It was considered desirable, at the time of making these treaties, to strengthen the hands of the chiefs and councillors whose tact and common sense had greatly helped on the negotiations, and to make them, as it were, partially responsible State-officials; to which end, having regard to the Indian love of display, no better means could have been devised than the presentation of these uniforms, flags, and medals.

4. The allotment of lands to the Indians, to be set aside as reserves for agricultural purposes, and not to be sold or alienated without their consent and then only for

their benefit; one "section," or 640 acres, being thus reserved for each family of five. The Canadian system of allotting reserves to one or more bands together, in the localities where they had been in the habit of residing, has proved far preferable to the United States system of locating whole tribes on huge reserves, which eventually excited the cupidity of their white neighbours and were broken up, often without even a show of legality. In several cases this breaking up of national reserves led to warfare, and in many others to widespread and bitter discontent. Even the most vagrant Indians of the North-West were strongly attached to the localities in which they and their fathers had been accustomed to pitch their camps from time to time, and, very wisely, the Canadian Government decided to cultivate their rudimentary sense of the meaning of the word "home" to the utmost extent of their power. Furthermore, the Canadian system of band-reserves was an application of the Imperial maxim *Divide et impera*; not only because it diminished the strength for offence of the Indians, but also because it facilitated the instruction of them in the arts of peace. And, again, the fact of these reserves being located here and there among the settled areas of the North-West has enabled nearly all the Indian bands to obtain markets among the white colonists for surplus produce of any kind.

5. A very important feature was the presentation to all these bands of agricultural implements, oxen, cattle to be the nuclei of herds, and seed-grain, whenever required. Even at the time the treaties were arranged many of the Indians were not unconscious of their destiny, and of the necessity of seeking part of their livelihood from the



earth. Thus, one of the Fort Pitt chiefs described to Governor Morris his efforts to get a little farming done. "I got a plough from Mr. Christie of the Company," said the old man; "I have no cattle; I put myself and my young men in front of it in the spring, and drag it through the ground. I have no hoes; I make them out of the roots of trees. Surely when the Great Mother" (*i.e.* the Queen) "hears of our needs she will come to our help." This disposition has been encouraged in every possible way by the Canadian Government, and all the reserves in the North-West are now full of comfortable houses and "gardens" (as the Indians call their crop-fields) of considerable extent.

6. Finally, provision has been made in every case for a school or schools on the reserves.

7. All the treaties provide for the exclusion of spirits from the reserves in accordance with the strongly-expressed wishes of the chiefs, who helped to make them, and knew the weakness of their people.

In order to carry them out in detail the area affected by these treaties was divided into two superintendencies; that of Manitoba including Treaties 1, 2, 3, and 4; and that of the North-West Territories including Nos. 5, 6, and 7. Since then, year after year, improvements have been made in the working of the scheme, and at the present time nearly all the officers of the Indian Department are men with a practical knowledge of the Indian character, who carry out their duties with tact and firmness. But for the unfortunate intrusion of the "spoils system" into Canadian politics, the exceptions to this rule would be still fewer; even as things are, however, the Canadian Indian is

infinitely better governed than his brother in the United States.

During 1899 an eighth has been added to these seven treaties, by which the Indian title to Athabasca and the Peace River district has been extinguished. The provisions of this new treaty are the same, *mutatis mutandis*, as those of No. 7, which I quote in full. In course of time, no doubt, the Indians of the Yukon and Mackenzie Rivers will "take treaty" as wards and pensioners of the Great Mother; but the fact that the Far North is incapable of agricultural development renders that contingency remote, though not so remote as might at first thought appear. Already the moose and caribou, on which these poor people live, as well as the smaller animals, whose pelts pay them the only luxuries—tea, sugar, and tobacco—of their hard and cheerless lives, are disappearing before the advance of the white trader and miner, and the recent abolition of the old credit system (the outward and visible sign of which is the use of a greenback instead of a "made beaver" as the unit of transactions) of the Hudson's Bay Company, while it will improve the position of some, must depress that of the majority.

To these the future will bring enough for their humble needs; the possession, that is, of a small but perpetual annuity and the certainty of employment at a living wage in the mines of Yukon, and, it may be, of Mackenzie.

ARTICLES of a Treaty made and concluded this twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven,

between Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, by her Commissioners, the Honourable David Laird, Lieutenant-Governor and Indian Superintendent of the North-West Territories, and James Farquharson McLeod, C.M.G., Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, of the one part; and the Blackfeet, Blood, Piegan, Sarcee, Stony, and other Indians, inhabitants of the territory north of the United States boundary line, east of the central range of the Rocky Mountains, and south and west of Treaties numbers six and four, by their head chiefs and minor chiefs or councillors, chosen as hereinafter mentioned, of the other part :

Whereas the Indians inhabiting the said territory have, pursuant to an appointment made by the said Commissioners, been convened at a meeting at the "Black-foot crossing" of the Bow River, to deliberate upon certain matters of interest to Her Most Gracious Majesty, of the one part, and the said Indians of the other :

And whereas the said Indians have been informed by Her Majesty's Commissioners that it is the desire of Her Majesty to open up for settlement, and such other purposes as to Her Majesty may seem meet, a tract of country, bounded and described as hereinafter mentioned, and to obtain the consent thereto of her Indian subjects inhabiting the said tract, and to make a treaty, and arrange with them, so that there may be peace and goodwill between them and Her Majesty, and between them and Her Majesty's other subjects ; and that her Indian

people may know and feel assured of what allowance they are to count upon and receive from Her Majesty's bounty and benevolence :

And whereas the Indians of the said tract, duly convened in council, and being requested by Her Majesty's Commissioners to present their head chiefs and minor chiefs and councillors, who shall be authorized, on their behalf, to conduct such negotiations and sign any treaty to be founded thereon, and to become responsible to Her Majesty for the faithful performance by their respective bands of such obligations as should be assumed by them, the Blackfeet, Blood, Piegan, and Sarcee Indians have therefore acknowledged for that purpose the several head and minor chiefs, and the said Stony Indians, the chiefs and councillors who have subscribed hereto, that thereupon in open council the said Commissioners received and acknowledged the head and minor chiefs, and the chiefs and councillors presented for the purpose aforesaid :

And whereas the said Commissioners have proceeded to negotiate a treaty with the said Indians ; and the same has been finally agreed upon and concluded as follows, that is to say, the Blackfeet, Blood, Piegan, Sarcee, Stony, and other Indians inhabiting the district hereinafter more fully described and defined, do hereby cede, release, surrender, and yield up to the Government of Canada, for Her Majesty the Queen and her successors for ever, all their rights, titles, and privileges whatsoever, to the lands included within the following limits, that is to say :

Commencing at a point on the international boundary due south of the western extremity of the Cypress Hills ;

thence west along the said boundary to the central range of the Rocky Mountains, or to the boundary of the Province of British Columbia; thence north-westerly along the said boundary to a point due west of the source of the main branch of the Red Deer River; thence south-westerly and southerly, following on the boundaries of the tracts ceded by the Treaties numbered Six and Four to the place of commencement; and also all their rights, titles, and privileges whatsoever to all other lands wherever situated in the North-West Territories or in any other portion of the Dominion of Canada:

To have and to hold the same to Her Majesty the Queen and her successors for ever.

And Her Majesty the Queen hereby agrees with her said Indians, that they shall have right to pursue their vocations of hunting throughout the tract surrendered as heretofore described, subject to such regulations as may from time to time be made by the Government of the country, acting under the authority of Her Majesty; and saving and excepting such tracts as may be required or taken up from time to time for settlement, mining, trading or other purposes by her Government of Canada, or by any of Her Majesty's subjects duly authorized therefor by the said Government.

It is also agreed between Her Majesty and her said Indians, that reserves shall be assigned them of sufficient area to allow one square mile for each family of five persons, or in that proportion for larger or small families, and that said reserves shall be located as follows, that is to say:

First.—The reserves of the Blackfeet, Blood, and Sarcee bands of Indians shall consist of a belt of land

on the north side of the Bow and South Saskatchewan Rivers, of an average width of four miles along said rivers, down stream, commencing at a point on the Bow River twenty miles north-westerly of the "Blackfoot crossing" thereof, and extending to the Red Deer River at its junction with the South Saskatchewan; also for the term of ten years, and no longer, from the date of the concluding of this treaty, when it shall cease to be a portion of said Indian reserves, as fully to all intents and purposes as if it had not at any time been included therein, and without any compensation to individual Indians for improvements, of a similar belt of land on the south side of the Bow and Saskatchewan Rivers of an average width of one mile along said rivers, down stream; commencing at the aforesaid point on the Bow River, and extending to a point one mile west of the coal seam on said river, about five miles below the said "Blackfoot crossing;" beginning again one mile east of the said coal seam and extending to the mouth of Maple Creek at its junction with the South Saskatchewan; and beginning again at the junction of the Bow River with the latter river, and extending on both sides of the South Saskatchewan in an average width on each side thereof of one mile, along said river, against the stream, to the junction of the Little Bow River with the latter river, reserving to Her Majesty, as may now or hereafter be required by her for the use of her Indian and other subjects, from all the reserves hereinbefore described, the right to navigate the above-mentioned rivers, to land and receive fuel and cargoes on the shores and banks thereof, to build bridges and establish ferries thereon, to use the fords thereof and all the trails leading thereto,

and to open such other roads through the said reserves as may appear to Her Majesty's Government of Canada necessary for the ordinary travel of her Indian and other subjects, due compensation being paid to individual Indians for improvements, when the same may be in any manner encroached upon by such roads.

Secondly.—That the reserve of the Piegan band of Indians shall be on the Old Man's River, near the foot of the Porcupine Hills, at a place called "Crow's Creek."

And thirdly.—The reserve of the Stony band of Indians shall be in the vicinity of Morleyville.

In view of the satisfaction of Her Majesty with the recent general good conduct of her said Indians, and in extinguishment of all their past claims, she hereby, through her Commissioners, agrees to make them a present payment of twelve dollars each in cash to each man, woman, and child of the families here represented.

Her Majesty also agrees that next year, and annually afterwards for ever, she will cause to be paid to the said Indians, in cash, at suitable places and dates, of which the said Indians shall be duly notified, to each chief twenty-five dollars, each minor chief or councillor (not exceeding fifteen minor chiefs to the Blackfeet and Blood Indians, and four to the Piegan and Sarcee bands, and five councillors to the Stony Indian bands) fifteen dollars, and to every other Indian of whatever age, five dollars; the same, unless there be some exceptional reason, to be paid to the heads of families for those belonging thereto.

Further, Her Majesty agrees that the sum of two thousand dollars shall hereafter every year be expended in the purchase of ammunition for distribution among



the said Indians; provided that if at any future time ammunition became comparatively unnecessary for said Indians, her Government, with the consent of said Indians, or any of the bands thereof, may expend the proportion due to such band otherwise for their benefit.

Further, Her Majesty agrees that each head chief and minor chief, and each chief and councillor duly recognized as such, shall once in every three years during the term of their office receive a suitable suit of clothing, and the head chief and Stony chief, in recognition of the closing of the treaty, a suitable medal and flag, and next year, or as soon as convenient, each head chief and minor chief and Stony chief shall receive a Winchester rifle.

Further, Her Majesty agrees to pay the salary of such teachers to instruct the children of said Indians as to her Government of Canada may seem advisable, when said Indians are settled on their reserves and shall desire teachers.

Further, Her Majesty agrees to supply each head and minor chief, and each Stony chief, for the use of their bands, ten axes, five handsaws, five augers, one grindstone, and the necessary files and whetstones.

And further, Her Majesty agrees that the said Indians shall be supplied as soon as convenient, after any band shall make the application therefor, with the following cattle for raising stock, that is to say: for every family of five persons and under, two cows; for every family of more than five persons and less than ten persons, three cows; for every family of over ten persons, four cows; and every head and minor chief, and every Stony chief, for the use of their bands, one bull; but if any band

desire to cultivate the soil as well as raise stock, each family of such band shall receive one cow less than the above mentioned number, and in lieu thereof, when settled on their reserves and prepared to break up the soil, two hoes, one spade, one scythe, and two hay forks; and for every three families, one plough and one harrow; and for each band, enough potatoes, barley, oats, and wheat (if such seeds be suited for the locality of their reserves) to plant the land actually broken up. All the aforesaid articles to be given, once for all, for the encouragement of the practice of agriculture among the Indians.

And the undersigned Blackfeet, Blood, Piegan, and Sarcee head chiefs and minor chiefs, and Stony chiefs and councillors, on their own behalf, and on behalf of all other Indians inhabiting the tract within ceded, do hereby solemnly promise and engage to strictly observe this treaty, and also to conduct and behave themselves as good and loyal subjects of Her Majesty the Queen. They promise and engage that they will, in all respects, obey and abide by the law, that they will maintain peace and good order between each other, and between themselves and other tribes of Indians, and between themselves and others of Her Majesty's subjects, whether Indians, half-breeds, or whites, now inhabiting, or hereafter to inhabit, any part of the said ceded tract; and that they will not molest the person or property of any inhabitant of such ceded tract, or the property of Her Majesty the Queen, or interfere with or trouble any person passing or travelling through the said tract, or any part thereof, and that they will assist the officers of Her Majesty in bringing to justice and punishment any Indian offending

against the stipulations of this treaty, or infringing the laws in force in the country so ceded.

In witness whereof Her Majesty's said Commissioners, and the said Indian head and minor chiefs, and Stony chiefs and councillors have hereunto subscribed and set their hands, at the "Blackfoot crossing" of Bow River, the day and year herein first above written.

(Signed) DAVID LAIRD,  
*Gov. of N.-W. T., and Special Indian  
Commissioner.*

JAMES F. MCLEOD,  
*Lieut.-Colonel, Com. N.-W. M. P., and  
Special Indian Commissioner.*

CHAPO-MEXICO (or Crowfoot), His X mark.  
*Head Chief of the South Blackfeet.*

MATOSE-APIW (or Old Sun), His X mark.  
*Head Chief of the North Blackfeet.*

STAMISCOTOCAN (or Bull Head), His X mark.  
*Head Chief of the Sarcees.*

MEKASTO (or Red Crow), His X mark.  
*Head Chief of the South Bloods.*

SETENAH (or Rainy Chief), His X mark.  
*Head Chief of the North Bloods.*

SAKOYE-AOTAN (or Heavy  
Shield), His X mark.  
*Head Chief of the Middle Blackfeet.*

ZOATZE-TAPITAPIW (or Sitting on an  
Eagle Tail), His X mark.  
*Head Chief of the North Piegans.*

And forty-four others.

## APPENDIX C

### IRRIGATION IN THE NORTH-WEST

METEOROLOGICAL data collected at various Government observations during the last twelve years—to say nothing of the experience of thousands of farmers, who have year after year incurred serious losses—have now conclusively proved that over a large and fairly well-defined area of Western Canada the yearly rainfall is, as a rule, insufficient to mature the ordinary grain and root crops. Investigation has shown that this “Arid Region” of the prairie-country may be regarded as bounded by the following limits—on the south by the International boundary ; on the east by a line starting at the intersection of the 102nd meridian of longitude with the International boundary, and running from thence north-westerly to latitude  $51^{\circ} 30'$  ; on the north by that parallel of latitude, and on the west by the Rocky Mountains. Within these limits are contained not less than 80,000 square miles, or upwards of 50,000,000 acres, and a population much greater than that to be found in any other section of the North-West Territories of equal area. The soil of the Arid Region—which includes most of Assiniboia

and of Southern Alberta—is, as a whole, very deep and of an exceptionally fertile constitution.

The settlers in the more easterly localities of this territory, which are not specially adapted for stock-raising owing to the comparative lack of vegetation on the prairie, are for the most part men of small means, who have naturally turned their attention to mixed farming; on the other hand, Western Assiniboia and Southern Alberta, whose wealth of rich and delicate native grasses rendered them a favourite pasturage of the buffalo during the reign of "The Company," have attracted many capitalists, who have been able to engage in stock-raising on a large scale—a pursuit which requires a considerable preliminary outlay and is not immediately profitable. Seeing that the yearly rainfall (which averages 10·91 inches over the whole of the Arid Region and is as much as sixteen inches in Southern Alberta) is always sufficient to ensure an adequate supply of "ridge-hay" for the wandering bands of cattle, the business of stock-raising has prospered fairly well; mixed farming, however, has in most localities proved more or less of a failure since 1884, and the necessity of importing all sorts of farm-produce from Manitoba and from other parts of the Territories has reduced even the profits of the big cattle-men. Accordingly a large percentage of the original settlers have either removed into other parts of Canada or have emigrated a second time to the Western States.

The question, How came so many emigrants to settle in a country so unsuitable for agriculture? is certain to be asked; and it is worth answering at some length, if only because the explanation of so notable a blunder illustrates the necessity of scientific inquiry into the

climatology of a newly-opened field for settlement. Though it was known that several districts—similarly situated with regard to well-marked mountain-ranges and with regard to the ocean—not only in South America but also in the United States, are subject to a periodic variation of their yearly rainfall, yet the operation of a like cycle of dry to wet seasons in the prairie-country of Western Canada was quite unsuspected in the early eighties, when the tide of immigration which followed the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway was at its height. These years were remarkable for a rainfall much above the average in almost all localities between the Rocky Mountains and the Great Lakes, and the “Arid Region” received a sufficient supply of moisture. Indeed, in 1884 \* the rainfall in Assiniboia and Southern Alberta was so great that, although the two following years were comparatively dry, the amount of water retained in the lakes and creeks led settlers to believe that 1885 and 1886 were seasons of abnormal deficiency. The warnings of Indian hunters and half-breed “freighters,” who pointed out places where the old trails ran down into these lakes and creeks, were disregarded by the new arrivals ; and several seasons of still more pronounced drought passed away before the necessity of irrigation was perceived and its utility demonstrated by the success of small systems constructed here and there by enterprising individuals.

The presence of a considerable population within the limits of the Arid Region was, no doubt, the main consideration which induced the late Conservative Government to introduce the innovation of State-aided

\* The same thing occurred in 1899.

irrigation into Canada. The North-West Irrigation Act, which was placed upon the Dominion Statute-book in 1894, has been framed with unusual care and completeness. Not only were copies of the original bill (which passed its second reading in 1893, but was subsequently withdrawn for further amendment) sent to a number of Irrigation engineers, many of whose suggestions were utilised; but also a member of the Land Survey Department visited California, Colorado, Utah, and Washington, and embodied his observations on the systems in vogue in those four States in an exhaustive report (to be found in the "Annual Report for 1895" of the Minister of the Interior), which should be read by every intending emigrant who thinks of trying "wet farming" in Canada or the United States. From a legal point of view the most important provisions of the Act are the abolition of riparian rights and the vesting of the absolute control of all water in the same strong central authority which owns the vacant lands. The Dominion Government, accordingly, having control not only of the water but also of the land, should be able to administer the two so as to secure the greatest benefit to the greatest number. In some of the Western States riparian rights have been thus abolished and the title to the water vested in the Commonwealth (*i.e.* in the individual State), but there all vacant lands are the property of the Federal Government, so that it has proved impossible, owing to this division of authority, to manage the land and water to the best advantage, or even to avoid extensive jobbery and much costly litigation.

From the elaborate hydrographical survey carried out during the summer and autumn of 1894 by Mr. J. S.



Dennis and other officials of the Land Survey of Canada, it would appear that the water-supply available for irrigation in the Arid Region of Western Canada is more plentiful and more accessible than might have been expected. Indeed, that portion of the territory in question which lies between the Rocky Mountains and the 110th meridian of longitude is more fortunate in this respect than any one of the four "Irrigation States"—Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming—whose climatic conditions and topography are to some extent like those of Western Canada. This district is watered by a number of rivers and innumerable creeks, nearly all of which, being run-off channels for mountainous catchment areas, are subject to spring and summer freshets. After leaving the foothills the larger streams, with few exceptions, flow in very deep valleys, so that only the bottom-lands could be directly irrigated, but the fall of these streams, more especially in their upper reaches, is so very considerable that many opportunities are afforded of diverting their waters to the high bench or prairie lands farther down. By such devices, and by utilizing the numerous favourable sites for the construction of reservoirs to retain the flood-discharge of these water-courses, it is certain that between two and three millions of acres lying west of longitude 110° can be reclaimed at an average cost per acre of less than \$4.

With regard to the remainder of the Arid Region—a large expanse of level or rolling prairie drained chiefly by the South Saskatchewan River, which flows in a wide terraced valley several hundreds of feet below prairie level—it is hardly possible at present to estimate how much of the land there is irrigable at a less cost

than \$6 per acre—the maximum expenditure which fields producing the staple crops of the temperate zone can reasonably be expected to repay. A number of small and scattered areas can be irrigated cheaply enough by means of storage reservoirs constructed along the smaller watercourses and on the slopes of the Missouri Coteau and of the Cypress Hills; and the bottom-lands of the Qu'Appelle River are also worthy of attention; but to reclaim the extensive tracts of open prairie towards the east requires engineering works of great magnitude. Further surveys, however, must be made before the two schemes suggested by Mr. Dennis—the diverting of water from the South Saskatchewan *viâ* the Qu'Appelle Valley; and the draining of certain large alkaline lakes, so that their basins may be used to save the flood-waters of various drainage channels—need be seriously considered. The former scheme was first discussed as long ago as 1859 by Professor Hind, whose idea was to create a navigable water-way across the Fertile Belt by augmenting the shallow Qu'Appelle River.

The great part which Irrigation—less judiciously controlled and far more costly than is likely to be the case in Western Canada—has played in the development of the Western States during the last twenty years is not generally known. The following statistics from the United States Census Report for 1890 justify the hope that Canada's newly-found "Irrigation policy" will eventually prove a considerable factor in the prosperity of the North-West Territories. In 1890 the total area under irrigation in eleven of the Western States was 3,564,416 acres; the estimated value of these lands was \$296,850,000, and the value of their produce in 1889

was \$53,057,000, whereas the estimated first cost of bringing in the water was no more than \$29,050,000 and the yearly expenditure on the maintenance of irrigation works was judged to be about \$3,815,000. Considering that at least nine-tenths of these lands were practically valueless before the water was brought to them, and the irrigated area of the Western States is thought to have increased between 30 and 35 per cent. since 1890, it is not too much to say that this method of aiding farmers and fruit-growers has added £60,000,000 to the national wealth, and still adds £15,000,000 to the gross annual income of the United States. Furthermore, it has largely helped to maintain that phenomenal increase in the population of the Western States, which Sir John Macdonald saw to be a chief cause of the success of the Union. Thus the remark addressed by a Californian farmer to the writer, "Water has done more for us than gold or silver or politics," is no Yankee hyperbole, but the witty expression of a notable truth.

Though there can be no approach to that extraordinary increase in the value of land which has followed the artificial application of water in certain portions of California, there is no reason in the nature of things why Alberta and Assiniboia should not profit by the introduction of irrigation to at least as great an extent as Montana and Arizona. Besides a considerable addition to the national wealth and to the gross annual income of the Dominion, it is more than probable that the reclamation of the Arid Region of Western Canada will bring about a decided increase in the yearly influx of immigration and of immigrant capital across the International boundary. In particular, not a few of these

Canadian settlers in the United States, whose repatriation is so earnestly desired by all political parties in Canada, may be thereby induced to return. Also, since irrigable areas generally occur at intervals, and are seldom very extensive, the "hamlet-system" of settlement, which materially reduces the preliminary expenses of emigrants, and has many social and commercial advantages, is certain to be more commonly practised. The hundred odd Scandinavian, German, Russian, and Mennonite village communities which have been founded on that system in Manitoba and the North-West Territories, have, *cæteris paribus*, enjoyed a greater measure of prosperity than the average English-speaking settlement, where the simplest forms of co-operative farming are seldom practicable. The American Colonial Club—a really admirable institution, which has done a vast amount of colonization work in an unostentatious manner—has planted a number of such "agricultural brotherhoods" in the Irrigation States; and, besides these communities, of which the Greeley Colony in Colorado is perhaps the most successful, the Mormon Colonies in Utah and Ontario, with numerous other villages founded by Canadians in South California, are good instances of the application of the hamlet-system of settlement to irrigated or irrigable areas. Finally, the curious fact that irrigation prevents or minimizes the evil effects of summer frosts—a common plague in many parts of the Arid Region—must not be overlooked because no scientific explanation thereof is forthcoming. Even if the witness of farmers and fruit-growers in the colder Irrigation States were rejected, the sight frequently seen of late years in Southern Alberta of uninjured irrigated crops alongside

unirrigated fields which have been entirely destroyed by summer frost, should suffice to convince the most sceptical of its truth.

During the last few years the increase of area under irrigation within the limits of the Arid Region and the results from the application of water to growing crops have been very satisfactory. The number of ditches and canals in operation in 1897 was 115, representing a total length of 130 miles and an irrigated acreage of 79,300; since then the irrigated area is estimated to have been doubled, wet seasons, however, having led to a decrease of energy in this matter. It is a notable fact that the water has been brought to the land at an average cost of two and a quarter dollars per acre—less than half the average cost of similar work in Montana, which possesses the cheapest system of irrigation in the United States.

A little advice to would-be settlers in the Canadian North-West may be based on the foregoing account of a new departure.

1. Southern Alberta and Western Assiniboia have long been favourably known as stock-raising districts, albeit most emigrants from the United Kingdom possessed of the capital necessary for a start in that pursuit have preferred the United States, owing to the prevalent impression that better markets could be secured there. Of late years, however, that portion of the Arid Region—lying as it does on a chief highway between ocean and ocean, and not only having access to the markets of Eastern Canada and of Great Britain but also controlling that of British Columbia, where stock-raising is not and never can be more than a very minor

industry—has been at least as well situated in this respect as Montana or even Texas. The progress of irrigation (the statistics quoted above, for the accuracy of which the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories is responsible, show that a good beginning has been made) is bound to be accompanied by a great development not only of stock-raising but also of dairy-farming. It should be remembered that the reclamation of an insignificant acreage often renders a very large adjoining tract of arid land valuable as a cattle-range, seeing that the certainty of being able to grow enough fodder for wintering the stock permits all land which produces enough feed for the summer to be used as pasturage. Even the most arid parts of the so-called Arid Region fulfil this condition. Also the unsettled districts of Saskatchewan and other parts of the North-West Territories, though they may be described as humid, are not so well suited for stock-raising on a large scale; for—to say nothing of the inaccessibility—being thickly wooded, they do not afford such facilities for pasturage as the plains, and the winter there is too severe for cattle to run at large all the year round. Any man having the necessary capital and knowledge of the business may safely invest himself and his money in Alberta, and—always provided he is content to begin on a moderate scale—may reasonably hope to make good interest on his investment after the first three years or so. Indeed, if he avoids certain blunders too often perpetrated by North-Western stock-raisers, he should do exceedingly well. The big cattle-men of the North-West lose many thousands of dollars annually by exporting half-filled stock, whose beef is necessarily inferior to that of really



“fat” cattle both in quantity and quality; and it is really astounding how many of them are unable or unwilling to grasp and apply those principles of breeding beef, which are so well understood in Ontario. Also as regards horses, though things are not nearly so bad as they were a few years back, the art of breeding and the advantages of breeding something better than the “ten-dollar buck-jumper” are too often disregarded, and the breaking in and handling of well-bred animals is too often left to brutal and ignorant “range-riders.”

2. Emigrants of small means who intend to settle in the Dominion, should bear in mind that the experience of farmers in Western America clearly proves that a better living may be made on a small well-irrigated area than on 160 or 320 acres of average prairie-land which are subject to occasional drought. From one point of view irrigation is a form of insurance of crops, and—at any rate so far as Western America is concerned—is a very cheap method of obtaining security against losses. Again, it is probable that for some years to come irrigated or irrigable lands in Western Canada may be bought at a very small fraction of the price asked for lands of similar capabilities on the other side of the International boundary, where also it has been truly said, “the upper mill-stone of a bad banking system and the under one of the mill-owners’ ring grind the small farmer exceeding small.”

3. The advantages of the “hamlet-system” of settlement as applied to irrigated or irrigable areas of moderate size should be remembered by philanthropists and philanthropic bodies in the north-country who assist emigrants.



## APPENDIX D

### CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF NORTH- WESTERN HISTORY

- 1670 Royal Charter, incorporating the Hudson's Bay Company, granted by Charles II. to Prince Rupert and his associates.
- 1682 Hudson's Bay Company built a factory on Nelson River.
- 1732 Verandrye built Fort St. Charles on the Lake of the Woods.
- 1765 English traders first entered the North-West.
- 1767 English traders penetrated to the Saskatchewan.
- 1770 Cumberland Post established by Hudson's Bay Company.
- 1779 North-West Company formed; it was re-constructed five years later.
- 1784 John Jacob Astor arrived in New York.
- 1793 Hudson's Bay Company made their first appearance at Red River.
- 1798 Formation of the X Y Company.
- 1805 Coalition of North-West and X Y Companies.
- 1809 South-West Fur Company established.
- 1810 North-West Company crossed the Rockies.

- 1811 Astoria founded by South-West Company. First  
Selkirk settlers leave Stornoway.
- 1813 Astoria fell into the hands of the North-West  
Company.
- 1816 Massacre of Governor Semple and his men.
- 1817 First Indian Treaty in the North-West.
- 1820 Lord Selkirk died.
- 1821 Union of the Hudson's Bay and North-West  
Companies.
- 1831 Lower Fort Garry built.
- 1839 The Hudson's Bay Company leased Alaska from  
the Russian Government.
- 1846 The 49th parallel of latitude agreed upon as the  
International Boundary-line.
- 1857 Select Committee of the House of Commons on  
the Hudson's Bay Company.
- 1858 The discovery of gold on the Fraser River.
- 1859 The Hudson's Bay Company's license to exclusive  
trade expires.
- 1860 The Company abandons Oregon and Washington.  
Death of Sir George Simpson.  
Cariboo placers discovered.
- 1867 Passing of the British-North-America Act.
- 1869 Conclusion of negotiations for transfer of the  
North-West Canada.
- 1870 Murder of Scott by Riel's party.  
Expedition under Col. Wolseley enters Fort  
Garry.
- 1871 Fenian Raid into Manitoba.  
Indian Treaties, No. 1 and No. 2, concluded.
- 1873 Indian Treaty No. 3 concluded.  
Formation of North-West Mounted Police.

- 1874 Indian Treaty No. 4 concluded.
- 1875 Indian Treaty No. 5 concluded.  
Organization of the North-West Territories.
- 1876 Indian Treaty No. 6.
- 1877 Indian Treaty No. 7.
- 1881 Winnipeg Boom began.
- 1882 Capital of North-West Territories moved to  
Regina.
- 1884 Canadian Volunteers go to Egypt under Wolseley.  
Discontent among old settlers on the Saskatche-  
wan.  
Riel invited from Montana.  
The Second Riel Rebellion.  
Last spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway driven  
by Sir Donald A. Smith. [Lord Strathcona and  
Mount Royal.]  
First shipment of wool from Alberta ranches.
- 1887 First shipment of cattle from North-West  
ranches.
- 1888 North-West Territories Act passed.
- 1890 The Empress of China Line of steamers began to  
run.
- 1892 Death of Sir John A. Macdonald.
- 1897 Klondike discoveries.
- 1899 Indian Treaty No. 8, whereby the Indian title to  
Athabasca was extinguished.
- 1900 Strathcona's Horse raised for service in South  
Africa.

# APPENDIX E

## STATISTICS, ETC.

THE subjoined tables give Acreage, Total Yield, and Yield per Acre of Wheat, Oats, and Barley, within the Province of Manitoba during the years 1893-99.

### WHEAT.

Year.	Acreage.	Yield per acre.	Total yield.
1893	1,003,640	15'56	15'615,923
1894	1,010,286	17	17,172,883
1895	1,140,276	27'86	31,775,038
1896	999,598	14'33	14,371,806
1897	...	...	18,261,377
1898	...	...	25,313,745
1899	...	...	27,922,230

### OATS.

Year.	Acreage.	Yield per acre.	Total yield.
1893	388,529	25'28	9,823,935
1894	413,686	28'8	11,907,854
* 1895	482,658	46'73	22,555,733
* 1896	442,445	28'25	12,505,318
1897	...	...	10,629,513
1898	...	...	17,308,252
1899	...	...	22,318,378

\* See note on next page.

## BARLEY.

Year.	Acreage.	Yield per acre.	Total yield.
1893	114,762	22·11	2,547,653
1894	119,528	25·87	2,981,716
* 1895	153,839	36·69	5,645,036
* 1896	127,885	24·08	3,171,747
1897	...	...	3,183,602
1898	...	...	4,277,927
1899	...	...	5,379,516

## COST OF PLANTING AN ACRE OF WHEAT IN MANITORA AND THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES, AND THE PROFIT THEREOF.†

Ploughing once ...	...	...	...	...	\$1·25
Harrowing twice ...	...	...	...	...	'20
Cultivating twice ...	...	...	...	...	'40
Drilling ...	...	...	...	...	'22
Binding ...	...	...	...	...	'33
Cost of twine ...	...	...	...	...	'18
Stooking ...	...	...	...	...	'16
Stacking ...	...	...	...	...	'50
Rent of land—calculated at two years' interest at 6 per cent. on land valued at \$15 per acre	...	...	...	...	1·80
Depreciation of implements, etc.	...	...	...	...	'50
Threshing charges ...	...	...	...	...	1·00
Seed 1½ bushel ...	...	...	...	...	'75
					\$7·29
Hauling ...	...	...	...	...	'50
					\$7·79

For this he gets 20 bushels of wheat worth, say, 50 cents per

\* The enormous "bonanza" crop of 1896 was not fully harvested until the ground froze up and left no time for "full" ploughing. The spring of 1896 was also very late; so that not only was the acreage of crop necessarily smaller, but much of the seed was sown on the stubble.

† The calculations are based on trials made at the Government

bushel ; if he has to haul it 10 miles to the elevator or market, this will mean (at the rate of  $\frac{1}{4}$  cent per bushel per mile) a deduction of 50 cents in his profit.

Value of wheat, 20 bushels at 50 cents per bushel \$10.

The profit is, therefore, \$2'21 on his outlay of \$7'79.

#### MINERAL OUTPUT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

1895-1898.

Year.	Gold (from placers).	Gold (from quartz).	Silver.	Copper.	Lead.
	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.	lbs.	lbs.
1895	24,084	39,264	1,496,522	952,840	16,475,464
1896	27,201	62,259	3,135,343	3,818,356	24,199,977
1897	25,676	106,141	5,472,971	5,325,180	38,841,135
1898	32,167	110,061	4,292,401*	7,271,678	31,693,559*

#### VALUE OF MINERAL OUTPUT, 1890-1898.

1890	...	...	...	\$2,608,608
1891	...	...	...	2,546,702
1892	...	...	...	3,017,971
1893	...	...	...	3,588,413
1894	...	...	...	4,225,717
1895	...	...	...	5,655,302
1896	...	...	...	7,146,425
1897	...	...	...	7,565,951
1898	...	...	...	7,172,766*

Owing to the great extent of the Territories, and the lack of local authorities through whom the Territorial Government can collect reliable statistics, the Annual

Experimental Farm near Brandon. The yield on that occasion was 29 bushels per acre, but I have taken 20 bushels as representing the average yield in an average season and have made other slight but necessary alterations.

\* This temporary falling off was due to labour disputes.

Report of the N.-W.T. Department of Agriculture is necessarily very incomplete in this respect. The following remarks show that the importance of the work of collecting and collating statistics bearing on the economy of a new country is well understood.

“It may be said that the compilation of statistics bears the same relation to the administration of a country as an intelligent system of book-keeping to the management of any business. In addition to the value of statistics as showing the progress and development of the country as years go, this work possesses an actual direct value to the farmer and business man. . . . Lack of statistical information invariably creates instability of markets. The middleman must purchase at safe prices, and the result always is that any loss is borne by the producer.”

A good case in point is the oat-crop along the Calgary and Edmonton Railway, most of which for some years past dealers in agricultural produce have bought up for British Columbian markets. In a great many cases oats have been purchased by these dealers at as low a figure as twelve cents a bushel, and the invariable experience has been that by the time an approximation of the supply and demand could be arrived at the value has risen considerably—has even been doubled. Here the loss falls altogether on the producer. Now, if estimates could be formed of the Territorial crops as well as of those of Manitoba (which are generally known within half a million bushels before harvesting), and the probable demand for grain, hay, etc., in the Kootenay and other mining districts could be gauged at the same time, and this information placed before the Territorial producers, it is certain that the



income of a large number of settlers would be greatly increased each year.

The subjoined Tables (taken from the Annual Report for 1898 of the Territorial Department of Agriculture) are of great importance to the would-be settler in the Territories. No. 1, which gives the mean annual precipitation for a varying number of years at eight centres of North-Western settlement, should be studied in connection with the Appendix on Irrigation in Western Canada. It will be noticed, *e.g.*, that in five years out of fifteen the precipitation at Regina was less than 5'00 inches, and in those five years the crops were a failure. It follows, therefore, that the district of which Regina is the market-town is by no means a favourable location for the grain-producer; for, in spite of the fact that of late seasons have been rainy, it is certain that the seasons of complete drought will recur. No. 2 gives the wheat production for ten districts, and the production per acre of wheat, oats, and barley. From these the relative development of the sixteen districts may be judged, but until such tables extending over a term of years can be compared and contrasted by the statistician, no light is thrown on the relative fertility of the localities in question from this source. In the case of Districts 2 and 10 wheat is grown on irrigated land.

TABLE I.  
ANNUAL PRECIPITATION, FROM 1883 TO 1898 INCLUSIVE.

Station.	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898
Regina ...	...	8.16	2.89	3.18	14.93	7.02	2.22	11.47	12.39	9.46	4.88	3.90	9.29	15.19	5.97	8.66
Medicine Hat	...	12.49	8.02	5.47	8.43	11.98	6.08	7.79	9.70	7.81	9.08	10.09	11.39	11.21	11.77	15.90
Edmonton	6.27	11.97	10.30	6.53	9.48	15.88	6.48	19.30	15.63	11.43	12.34	12.27	10.77	9.50	12.16	10.90
Swift Current	...	...	...	7.45	13.88	9.96	6.37	13.04	17.68	12.18	8.68	6.62	9.50	9.62	12.23	15.25
Qu'Appelle	...	11.40	6.68	6.94	11.16	13.47	5.93	18.34	15.31	11.42	11.25	6.63	11.96	15.46	8.76	21.65
Calgary ...	...	...	...	7.28	10.15	12.40	5.88	10.70	8.93	5.47	6.88	8.49	10.76	8.68	15.69	*8.92
Prince Albert	...	...	...	6.44	...	...	7.30	12.23	8.77	8.76	8.45	5.17	8.88	13.25	11.04	†13.35
Battleford ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.41	10.63	9.24	9.79	10.56	8.65	14.09	14.15

\* 8 months.

† 11 months.

TABLE II.

## WHEAT.

				Acreage.	Crop.	Yield per acre.
					Bush.	Bush.
1.	South-East Assiniboia	...		48,530	727,954	15
2.	South-West Assiniboia	...		1,925	46,210	24
3.	Central Assiniboia	...		194,607	3,502,970	18
4.	North-East Assiniboia	...		13,487	175,328	13
5.	North-West Assiniboia	...		No	returns at	present
6.	East Saskatchewan	...	...	17,002	283,925	16.69
7.	West Saskatchewan	...	...	702	14,049	20
8.	North Alberta	...	...	24,122	627,201	26
9.	Central Alberta	...	...	5,222	104,673	20
10.	South Alberta	...	...	1,983	47,608	24

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